

## PEACE BY CONFERENCE

## The Nation

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## Events of the Week.

THE new Chancellor of the German Empire met the Reichstag on Thursday, and made the speech for which all Europe was waiting. With some ambiguities, which must be cleared up, it means, as we read it, that the German Government, like the majority of the Reichstag, is ready for a peace based on the *status quo ante bellum*, and, therefore, without conquests, that they have nothing to say on Alsace-Lorraine, but that they are ready for a "give and take" deal. The speech was quiet in tone, contained none of the passionate and provocative phrases in which the late Chancellor often indulged, and suggested a balanced, if colorless, personality. The survey of the military position was not boastful. The opening sentences contained a significant rebuke to the Junker critics of the late Chancellor, and clearly Dr. Michaelis does not wish to be regarded as their nominee. He said that the submarine war, which our "illegal blockade" had forced upon Germany, was yielding the expected results, predicted that we should not be able to hold out against the necessity of peace much longer, and argued that America would be unable to transport and feed a large army in France, and that a larger Allied Army there cannot be supported without impairing our economic situation. He admitted "bitter want" in Germany, but expected an average harvest. Germany, he declared, cannot be starved out.

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THE general tone of his references to the war was that of a man who regards it as a breakdown. What would come out of it would be, not a "Germany terrorizing the world with her armed might," but a

"morally purified" Germany, looking back on a time of unprecedented sorrow and sacrifice. She had proved herself "unconquerable," but she retained her defensive aims. She wanted "a lasting reconciliation of the nations," and she must have a safeguard that "the league in arms of her opponents does not develop into an economic offensive alliance." But it must be understood that "the territory of the Fatherland is inviolable." There can be "no parley with an enemy who demands parts of our Empire." Its frontiers must be made secure for all time. By an understanding and "give-and-take" the conditions of existence of the German Empire must be guaranteed on the Continent and overseas. These aims might be attained within the limits of the Reichstag resolution. Germany could not again take the initiative in offering peace, but she would listen to what her enemies had to say.

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THESE passages are, on the whole, an endorsement and adoption of the Reichstag resolution, much of which the Chancellor quoted textually. The reference to making the frontiers "secure" is not clear and may be dangerous. But if we think it bears the sinister meaning which Mr. George read into it, we can surely, as Mr. Asquith urges, make further inquiries. The phrase about "give-and-take" does, indeed, suggest that any territorial changes which Germany desires in Europe or overseas are to be not military conquests, but the fruits of a bargain. She is clearly anxious chiefly about the Paris Economic Resolutions. It is open to us to press the opening given by Herr Scheidemann, and to suggest that in return for economic or Colonial concessions, the interests of "reconciliation" will be promoted most powerfully of all by a good, generous, durable arrangement over Alsace-Lorraine. After this speech the Reichstag passed the peace resolution of the Centre-Socialist-Radical Block by 214 to 116, with 17 abstentions. The Conservatives voted against it, and most of the National Liberals must have joined them. It is a good sign that the Junkers fought it, for this is a proof that it is a sincere declaration, which cannot be made to mean anything.

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ON the subject of internal reform, the Chancellor took a much more balancing line. The "Block" has won on peace, but only half-won on the democratic issue. Dr. Michaelis will not allow "the federal character and constitutional basis of the Empire to be impaired," nor consent to have "the conduct of affairs taken out of his hands." This confirms the view that it was Bavaria which vetoed responsible Parliamentary government. The federal basis of the Empire is difficult to reconcile with a Parliamentary régime. This means, however, that Bavaria values her present influence in the Bundesrat, and does not feel that Prussia or the Emperor actually dominates Germany. On the other hand, Dr. Michaelis is preparing to make concessions, first by the reform of the Prussian franchise, and, secondly, by calling to "leading executive positions men who possess the confidence of the great parties." Private conferences with the Emperor are still going on, and are expected to result in an offer of some ministerial

portfolios to Parliamentarians. This is an advance, though a tame one. The "Berliner Tageblatt" and the "Frankfurter Zeitung" treat the solution of the Chancellor crisis as a blow to German democracy, but the Centre shows no disposition to press the issue to a fight.

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MR. GEORGE's criticism of this speech was not a helpful or a discriminating one. He insisted that it faced all ways, and was meant merely for adaptation to a changing military situation (which is the fault of all the war speeches), but argued in effect that it pointed to Junkerdom and militarism. He insisted that Herr Michaelis's phrase, the "security of German frontiers," had bathed the Europe of 1870 in blood, and might drench its successor. It was all a sham—sham democracy, sham independence for Belgium, a sham peace. Statesmen can talk like this for ever, while millions bleed for their words. But, at least, Mr. George is bound to take account not merely of Dr. Michaelis's speech, but of the general situation in Germany out of which it sprang. This he omitted even to notice. But it is the vital point. Does Mr. George regard the Reichstag resolution as "sham democracy?" The speech has evoked fierce comment in Germany, where the Press by no means applauds the new Chancellor.

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THE only helpful and human contribution to the controversy has in fact been made by Mr. Asquith in Thursday's debate on the very moderate resolution moved by Mr. MacDonald, declaring that the Reichstag resolution expressed the "principles" of the policy of the Entente (who can say it does not?), and calling for a corresponding statement of our terms. Declaring that peace has become the "supreme interest of mankind," provided it does not defeat the higher purposes of the Entente, Mr. Asquith declared for a re-statement of its aims, and for a clearing up of those of Germany. Why not, he asked, put a "blunt" question to Germany as to whether, in face of the Chancellor's speech and the Reichstag Resolution, she is prepared to restore to Belgium "complete and unfettered and absolute independence?" Here is the kernel of the whole matter. But Mr. Law made no response. His speech was virtually a defence of a war of attrition. But what sign is there that he and his like know how to wage such a war, or how to end it? Challenged as to the peril of Russia, he declared that he did not "despair" of her. But the question is whether Russia does not despair of him, and of the helplessness of this conception of a "guerre sans fin."

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THE Russian crisis assumed a new phase with the sudden return of Kerensky from the Front to Petrograd on Sunday. A frank semi-official statement says that he found fault with the lack of energy shown in his absence by the Provisional Government during the Leninite riots. The Premier, Prince Lvoff, then tendered his resignation, and with him the four Cadet members also departed. They had many reasons for disagreement with their Socialist colleagues, chiefly on the land question and the nationality question. Kerensky then assumed the Premiership, with the Ministry of War, but the Cabinet remains a Liberal-Socialist combination. The stronger men in it, especially Tseretelli, at the Ministry of the Interior, are undoubtedly the Socialists. Tchernoff, with an advanced policy of land nationalization, retains the vital Ministry of Agriculture. The Cadets have now all gone, and the Liberals are drawn from the Progressive Party, which, while less advanced in theory than the Cadets, was always more revolutionary in tactics. Their ablest member is M. Terestchenko, at the Foreign Office. M. Nekrassoff has left the Cadet Party, and will be Vice-Premier in Kerensky's absence.

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The reconstituted Cabinet at once proclaimed the Fatherland in danger, and in view of the alarming news from the Front procured from the Soviet (the Council of Workmen and Soldiers' Delegates) plenary

powers. It is, however, stipulated that the Socialist Ministers of the Cabinet shall report twice weekly to the Soviet, which thus retains its informal control. Its first and most significant act was to cancel the repeal of the death penalty (which had been one of the first acts of the Revolution), with a view to shooting deserters and cowards at the Front. Meanwhile, it had disarmed and disbanded the mutinous regiments in the capital, dissolved the committee of the fleet, dismissed the more culpable officers of both services, and searched the workers' quarter for concealed arms. Some of the civilian leaders of Lenin's party were also arrested. Lenin himself came forward and challenged investigation. The revelations of suspicious monetary transaction by persons in this party or on its fringes continue, but the published evidence does not seem yet to supply any definite proof that Lenin had been bought with German gold. His crime against the Revolution is gross enough without that aggravation of personal dishonor. The wicked folly of their troops in firing on unarmed crowds (there were 500 casualties) has caused the whole party to be execrated in the capital.

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THE appeal to the country issued by the new Cabinet on Sunday was an eloquent exhortation to the Republic to rouse itself to the peril of the broken front, and to free itself from "the criminal levity and the blind fanaticism" which had nearly upset the revolution. After declaring that its first duty was to defend Russia against the enemy without and the enemy within, it goes on to reassure the country that it has not forgotten the peace programme of the revolution. "The revolutionary army can only go forward to the fight with the firm conviction that not a drop of blood of a Russian soldier will be shed for foreign ends." It will accordingly do all in its power to hasten the Allied Conference for the revision of the Entente's war-aims. This must meet in August, and to it Russia will send not only diplomats, but leaders of her democracy. Thus Kerensky and his colleagues conveyed their message to the West. Russia will pull herself together and restore her defensive line, but she expects the West to take the indispensable steps towards an early general peace. A telegram from Washington proposes that this Conference should meet in America—an admirable suggestion.

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THE military situation on the Russian Front has completely changed during the last week. It was then still possible to regard Lemberg as an immediate and feasible objective. General Korniloff's 8th Army, though withdrawn a few miles east of the Lomnitzka River, was still in possession of the bulk of the ground it had gained below the Dniester. At this moment it has not only evacuated all the territory secured by the offensive, it has even fallen back to the east of Stanislau, which was taken in Brussiloff's campaign last year. The reason for this retreat is the still greater retirement of the 7th and 11th Armies north of the Dniester. A week ago they were closely investing Brzezany. Now they are east of Tarnopol, a town which was not abandoned even in the great retreat of 1915. Towards the end of last week the Germans launched an attack in the direction of Tarnopol. The bombastic reference to the counter-offensive of Böhm-Ermoli in the speech of Michaelis was justified. The front of the 11th Army was completely broken, and in two days the Germans had reached the line of the River Sereth. The Russian *communiqués* made no secret of the reasons for this retreat. The troops did not show "the necessary stability." The "retreat was almost uninterrupted." The troops showed "complete disobedience towards their commanders."

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YET it is a point of some importance that though the Germans were on the Sereth, on each side of Tarnopol, on Saturday, the occupation of Tarnopol was only reported in the German *communiqué* of Wednesday. The Russian command seem to have taken the situation promptly in hand. General Gutor gave place to General Korniloff, who now commands the three armies involved

over a front of between 80 and 100 miles from Brody to below Stanislau. At present Korniloff seems to have a reliable pivot below Brody, and the Russian line has been swung back from that point to the Carpathians. We have no complete picture of the retreat. We have no information, for instance, of the fate of Halicz. It may have been occupied by the enemy or it may yet have a Russian garrison. The behavior of the troops has varied over the whole of the front. As the enemy took four or five days to effect a crossing of the Sereth, there must have been a firm resistance even on this sector of the line which at the beginning of the attack was held by the Eleventh Army. There was street fighting in Stanislau. The Germans report massed attacks near Tarnopol. The retreat, great as it has been, has not therefore been conducted without fighting. Unfortunately, the Russians who attempted to stand have paid for the defection of their comrades. The chief gain to the enemy and loss to the Allies is the great quantity of stores taken.

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**BRUSSILOFF** has attempted to gain time to rally his troops by initiating an attack on the most sensitive point of the German line. Vilna is the most important railway junction behind the enemy front, and an attack was delivered at Krevo, in the direction of Vilna, on Monday. An initial success was won. The Russians penetrated the German lines to a depth of some two miles, taking 1,000 prisoners. But again the success of the movement was paralyzed by the vacillation of the troops. Attacks south-west of Dvinsk were similarly successful at first. But, then, the troops became insubordinate and evacuated the ground won without enemy pressure. The territory gained at Krevo was abandoned owing to the powerful fire of the German artillery. Another diversion was attempted by the Roumanian Army, which apparently pierced the enemy lines north of the Putna, capturing several hundred prisoners and nineteen guns. The attack was a brilliant piece of tactics, and promises well for the new Roumanian Army. Little by little the Russians will discover which troops can be trusted, and in an empire of such vastness it is not improbable a sufficient number will be found to rally the defence or even to take the offensive. The worst element in the whole situation is the loss of matériel.

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THE struggle on the Chemin des Dames has continued during the week. The German attacks worked up to an incredible fury during the week-end, and it seemed as though the Crown Prince were determined to break through our Ally's front. On Sunday morning the eastern end of the ridge was deluged with shells from a huge accumulation of guns of all calibres; but, in spite of this preparation, the assaulting troops were cut up badly by the French guns and the most determined and repeated attacks only gave them possession of a small part of the Casemates and California plateaux. On Tuesday, the French counter-attacked and regained practically the whole of the ground, and even crossed their original line in places. So far as the Crown Prince has a military objective, it is the capture of the observation positions which will enable the troops holding them to thin their line. But he has failed once more. The bombardment on the Flanders coast section of the line has grown more and more intense, and an English squadron has been assisting the artillery and airmen in their task. Elsewhere there have been small local movements, one of them giving the Germans a few yards of ground. It is impossible not to see in these thrusts and parries the preliminaries of operations that may materially change the situation.

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THE War Office has surrendered. On Tuesday Lord Derby came down post-haste to the Committee on Medical Examinations, which had already addressed the Prime Minister with a peremptory warning that the system must be changed "at once," and the organization of the examinations and re-examinations transferred from the War Office to the Local Government Board. Lord Derby had "talked" to the Prime

Minister, between his car and the train that was to carry him to France, and Mr. George had found grace as swiftly and completely as the man who achieved salvation between the saddle and the ground. The Committee's resolution was "accepted with both hands," with an unsolicited bonus thrown in. In other words, the War Office were willing to surrender "the whole of the recruiting from A to Z" to the civil power. Thus Parliament and civism score their first great victory against militarism and conscription. It must be pushed home. The Committee's inquiry is by no means complete, and it must not stop till its full lesson has been driven into the imagination of the people.

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LAST week the House of Commons reached Clause V of the Corn Production Bill, the clause that creates the Agricultural Wages Board, and Mr. Wardle moved an amendment to raise the minimum from 25s., the figure in the Bill, to 30s. The Government took alarm, and it was decided that if the House were allowed to give a free vote, it might prefer Mr. Wardle's figure. Accordingly, the week-end was spent in frightening politicians with pictures of the Empire in ruins, and when the House met on Monday the debate was resumed under the threat of a dissolution. This threat was successful, and the amendment was rejected by 301 votes to 102. Mr. Prothero defended the Government figure as a great advance, and argued that it was a minimum. The danger is, of course, that the mention of a definite figure gives it a special sanction. The Norfolk laborers believe that Mr. Lloyd George's speech robbed them of a victory when they were pressing for 30s. Sir F. E. Smith pleaded that the Bill represented a bargain which could not be altered. The House of Commons, in fact, is only called in to ratify. This is an old device of Mr. Lloyd George's, as we remember in the Insurance Bill. The chief supporters of Mr. Wardle's amendment were Mr. Runciman, Mr. Buxton, Mr. Thomas, and Mr. MacDonald. Incidentally, Mr. Runciman corrected a rather grave misstatement for which Mr. Prothero apologized the following day.

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THE Government have published this week a summary of the reports of the eight local Commissions appointed on June 12th to inquire into the causes of industrial unrest. We gather from this summary, for which Mr. Barnes is responsible, that the findings of the local Commissions agree on the main causes. High food prices, inequalities of distribution, and profiteering come first. The working of the Munitions Acts is a very important element. Men complain of the restrictions on their freedom. They are suspicious of the intentions of the Government, and the employers in regard to trade union rights. Disputes drag on, and tribunals are dilatory. It will surprise nobody to know that the Military Service Acts have provoked a widespread sense of grievance. Industrial fatigue, bad housing, liquor restrictions, wage anomalies, the grievances of sweated women, all find a place in the reports. The several reports raise other points that affect particular districts. Since this report was issued, it has been announced that the engineers have rejected the proposal to extend dilution to private work by an overwhelming majority. We presume that the Government will drop this proposal.

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THE Commissioners recommend an immediate reduction in the price of food and a new system of distribution. For the general *malaise* of the industrial world they advise the carrying out of the proposals of the Whitley Committee, and other measures to restore confidence, which has been broken by the way in which changes have been introduced; a formal statement about violation of trade union rights and the departures already made recognised. The Government are urged to announce their housing policy, to raise the maximum under the Workmen's Compensation Act, to give Pensions Committees larger discretion in their conduct of discharged soldiers, to raise agricultural wages in the Western Area. It is significant that the speeches and resolutions of the Miners' Annual Conference have covered very much the same ground.

## Politics and Affairs.

### PEACE BY CONFERENCE.

READERS of the Prime Minister's speech at the Belgian celebration will have noticed a very serious omission. The speech itself was the sequel of the Glasgow oration. In that utterance Mr. George, following Mr. Wilson's lead, called for the "democratization of Germany," and suggested that the Allies would approach a free German Government in "a different temper, a different spirit," and with "more confidence" than a Government dominated by militarism. These were winged words: they flew over Germany, and were largely quoted in support of the democratic movement to whose opening campaign they were obviously a signal. The German democrats went on. They formed a new Parliamentary group of novel and not unpromising elements. They published a formula which brought the peace aims of Germany within measurable distance of those of America and Russia. They asked for "peace by agreement," declared that the "forcible acquisition of territory and political, economic, or financial usurpations" [or "oppressions"] were "incompatible with such a peace," and demanded the "reconciliation of the nations" and the organization of a system of international law [Rechtsorganisationen]. This resolution survived the Chancellor crisis, was put to the vote in the Reichstag, and was carried, with at least the connivance of Dr. Michaelis, by 214 votes to 116. *No reference to this transaction appears in Mr. George's speech.* The Prime Minister dealt at great length with the new Chancellor's declaration. He described it as a "facing-all-ways speech," a truthful characterization, which applies, we are afraid, to nearly every utterance of European statesmanship since the war began. But of its many facets he chose only those which looked to a scheme of annexations. Yet it would have been equally plausible to argue an agreement between the Chancellor's speech and the language and spirit of the Block's resolution. Dr. Michaelis did not mention Belgium. But he took over the main threads of the resolution. He repudiated "conquests by violence." He declared for a policy of "give-and-take," and for a peace built upon a "lasting reconciliation of the nations." Mr. George passed over all these hints of a more pacific spirit, and stressed only the dubious or menacing words which qualified them. He dwelt, with justice, on the dangers which hide behind "masked words" like the "security" of the German frontiers. Here not only the Prime Minister but the strongest "pacifist" amongst us can afford to be perfectly frank with Herr Michaelis. If he thinks to "secure" Germany by annexing Belgian soil or tampering with Belgian freedom, he wastes his breath. Never will England make peace on terms that leave the liberties of Belgium (or of France) in bondage to German power or in doubt to German speech. Let us then make firm where the ground on which we move is uncertain. The entire nation demands the full restoration of Belgian liberties. It is the essence of our policy. It is the first and the grand cause of our intervention in the war. The German Parliament has voted in this sense; it is open to the Prime Minister to contend that the German Chancellor has not spoken in a clear sense at all. But the lives of millions may hang on this question of German policy in Belgium. Therefore it is for British statesmanship to require of Dr. Michaelis either an explicit endorsement of the vote of the Reichstag or a definite repudiation of it.

Now, why has not this honest and simple course been taken? In his Glasgow speech Mr. George gave his

assent to the principle of a negotiated peace. He declared that Britain was willing to negotiate with a "free" Germany, even to approach it in a generous temper. But what is "free" or freer Germany? So far as Parliamentary representation goes, it is made up of her Socialists, her Radicals, and the spokesmen of her Catholic peasants and workmen. It is from this quarter that the offer of a verbally complete renunciation of a predatory peace proceeds. We make no attempt to describe it as the full text of a "peace of reconciliation." But it concedes its principle. The demand of the Allies, as Mr. Asquith formulated it, was the re-establishment of European liberties, and the creation of an organ of international peace, founded on law rather than on military force. If we assert, as we do assert, that both these principles were challenged by the German declaration of war and the German violation of France and Belgium, the resolution of the majority of the Reichstag is a confession of the defeat of that design. It is also a repudiation. Mr. George may even claim to have called up a new spirit from the depths of German State-egoism. Yet when it arises, instead of examining and questioning its message, he turns his back upon it, though it is the only voice which in Germany can frame even a hesitating reply to his challenge. Under such conditions the war may go on for ever. The German politician advances; our own representative retreats. Last year, it was we who advanced, while Germany retreated. Death alone goes unfaltering on his way, mowing down our sons.

Is there, then, no cure for the war, which is the world's disease and is wasting it away? There is. It lies in the policy which Mr. George has now adopted in principle, while he shrinks from its first and obvious application—the policy of PEACE BY CONFERENCE. That policy was impossible while the complete redemption of Belgium stood in doubt. It is not doubtful to-day. Two parties in Germany stood behind the annexation of Belgium or her absorption in the German power. They were the German Government and the German Parliament. Now the Government stands alone. The Parliament has declared for a free Belgium. The Government does not yet commit itself to the proposition that Belgium shall be unequivocally free. But it puts forward a formula under which a scheme of complete enfranchisement may well find shelter. We concede that a vote in the German Parliament hardly ranks with a vote in ours. The Reichstag falls far short of a sovereign assembly. Ministers are irresponsible to it, and, as yet, Germany stands only at the threshold of a true Parliamentary constitution. But the majority vote is the first independent act of a German Parliament. It gathers a mass of public opinion in favor of an unaggressive, and therefore, for Germany, a renunciatory peace such as has never before been collected or given a constitutional form. Is it contended that its expression is ambiguous, and the Chancellor's reflection of it still more so? Let us, then, clear up all ambiguities, beginning with our own. Democratic Germany has at last taken a definite step away from her "Six Unions," with their lawless designs on the iron ore of Lorraine, their infamous "War of Iron for Iron." Let us, too, stand clear of our own "Business Committee," and its policy of fighting for the "consolidation" of the "position" of the British Empire and of our Allies. Herr Naumann would "consolidate" Middle Europe into a German trade preserve. Our "business" Imperialists would so "consolidate" a fifth of the habitable globe, admitting our Allies only after their own wants, and those of our Dominions, have been satisfied. There are other "consolidators." Some would "consolidate"

Mesopotamia; others Palestine. Our Government is not committed to these plans, or to the more ideal proposition of the dismemberment of Austria. But so long as the resolutions of the Paris Conference stand as a shield behind the worst of them, they confuse and distort the presentation of our true war aims, in the eyes no less of our friends than of our foes.

The evil, therefore, of the hour stands self-disclosed. The Governments, with their eyes on the military situation, and speculating on the gains it may yield, speak to each other in terms which ignore the political object for which alone that situation exists. All that the world wants is security—not a German peace, or an English peace, but a World peace. But each group of statesmen thinks it can get something more, and selfish or absolutely unimaginative men behind them encourage them to think so. So the war becomes a gamble in the next battle, on land, on sea, or in the air. But while the gamble goes on the stakes, which are the young men of Europe, melt away. Yet if our rulers would only see it, the way of return to rational life stands open. A few weeks ago the Stockholm Conference was derided as a "German trap." To-day the Stockholm correspondent of the "Times" makes full admission of the truth that the effect on the Majority Socialists of what they saw and heard there was to send them home a party of "frank opposition." Nor is Stockholm our only example of the enlightening effect of conference. Since the beginning of the war a fierce controversy has raged with Germany over her treatment of our prisoners, with some rebutting charges, we suppose, advanced on her behalf. A neutral Power was able to arrange a direct Conference between representatives of the two Powers. It met, and in a few hours came to a reasonable settlement. What, then, is the obstacle to a resumption of the argument which Germany violently interrupted in August, 1914? Some day the War must issue in a Treaty. Let the military result be what it may, this is the inevitable political end of the conflict, so long as Germany remains an independent State. To a new "scrap of paper" we must come; and its moral value will rest, not on force, but on goodwill. With the resolution of the Reichstag, the first barrier to this process of enlightenment and reconciliation has fallen, and the forces of reason have only to march through the breach. It is therefore "up to" our own Liberal and Labor parties, and indeed to the moderate men of all parties, to make a formal response to the German Parliamentarians. The Governments are silent; but even they might welcome an intervening action of the Parliamentary power. The ground of that intervention is clear. Let Parliament call first for a re-definition of our war aims, and then for a Conference as a final clearing-house between them and the competing German formulas. The battle of world-liberty has been won when, in M. Albert Thomas's phrase, the nations unite "on the basis of a common acceptance of identical principles of Right," and agree on a common application of them. That is work not for soldiers, but for statesmen, meeting in a Conference of the belligerent and neutral Powers. On the day when that Conference assembles, it seals the assurance of our victory in the same act in which it signals the end of the war.

#### THE PERIL OF RUSSIA.

EVERYONE realizes that Russia has just emerged from an internal disorder which might have undone the Revolution, and all of us will wait breathlessly for news that after the military disasters in Galicia a defensive

line has been consolidated, and a barrier erected against invasion. The news from Petrograd has been so frank that no one underestimates the momentary danger. The general tendency may even be to exaggerate it, for we are not yet accustomed to the revolutionary sincerity which now inspires all the Russian official documents. To our thinking, the military collapse and the disorder caused by Lenin's partisans, are important chiefly as symptoms and warnings. These big events, because they are so dramatic, fill the foreground of our picture, and dispose public opinion to views of this Russian crisis which are perilously near-sighted. The current diagnosis seems to be that Lenin and his faction, seduced by German gold, tried to upset the Provisional Government in the interests of Berlin, and succeeded by deliberate treachery in spoiling an otherwise promising offensive. The prescription which follows on this diagnosis is equally simple: arrest the traitors, expose their plans, put Kerensky at the helm, and all will be well. This is to reduce a grave and complicated chapter of contemporary history to mere melodrama, and the prescription is as inadequate as the diagnosis is superficial. We rejoice that Kerensky is at the helm: we hope much from his energy and magnetism. But as the proclamation which he issued on assuming power clearly showed, a firm hand with disorder and a stout heart at the Front, are only the preliminary conditions of a solution. A political and economic chaos remains to be dealt with. Of this chaos Leninism is not the cause, but merely an angry symptom. Investigation will show how far German gold and conscious rascality played a part in fostering this singular outbreak. It is probable that Leninism, like every violent Russian movement, attracted undesirables to itself, from the underworld which used to thrive in the fetid atmosphere of the old régime. Lenin himself has a past which entitles him to a fair hearing. When a man of noble birth, with abilities which raised him to a Professor's Chair at Moscow, espouses under a savage despotism the dangerous cause of Socialism, and preaches it fearlessly amid every personal danger, the presumption is that he is a fanatic, but not a venal traitor. His resort to disorder was an unpardonable crime against his country and the Revolution. But we prefer to seek its motives not in corruption, but in unbalanced thinking.

Leninism is a doctrine of long standing, which had a numerous following among Russian Social Democrats many years before this war. Its adherents are commonly called "Maximalists," because they hold that any conditions which render a political revolution possible must be equally favorable to the attainment of the "maximum," a social revolution. If an armed proletariat is strong enough to overthrow Tsarism, it ought also to be able to overturn Capitalism. That is the central Leninite thesis, and it is that of the more extreme and academic Socialists the world over. It made this party hostile from the start to the half-way house of the present revolution, with its mixed Liberal-Socialist provisional government. With this premise the Maximalists could only be a party of opposition. One need not suspect foreign gold or pro-German tendencies: a wild but logical idea is for a race given to ideas the most potent of all motive forces. Starting from this fundamental position of hostility to any compromise with "the bourgeoisie," the Leninites found confirmation in each turn of events. For them Anglo-Franco-Italian Imperialism is as dangerous as the German variety, for in each they see only a phase of capitalism. They predicted that the Provisional Government would fail to induce the Western Powers to follow Russia's example and abandon Imperialist aims. They predicted that in the face of this failure a mixed Government would compromise. Their tactics were to use our fear of a separate peace in order to induce us to revise our war-aims, and meanwhile to withhold Russian help in the field. When the abler and more statesmanlike Kerensky inaugurated an offensive, they charged him with compromising the revolution. They backed their general arguments with an unceasing stream of "revelations." Now they divulged the alleged terms of secret pacts among the Allies for annexations that defied every principle of

nationality. Next they drew attention to the alarming indebtedness of Russia and to the risk that foreign capital may overshadow Russian policy. Finally, they attributed the offensive itself to direct financial pressure from one of the Allied Governments. Reasoning of this kind, backed by the prestige of such writers as Maxim Gorky, had its effect, and was probably only an extreme and one-sided statement of what most Russian Socialists half-believe and often fear. Saner men than Lenin realize that a separate peace would bring Russia fatally under German hegemony, and simpler men than this academic theorist feel how repugnant and dishonorable it would be to desert Allies who are in the war only because of the original Russo-German quarrel. Their sound human instincts saved them from the extravagances of Leninism, but few Russian Socialists were easy as they watched the drift of events. They all felt that the future of the revolution depends on an early general peace, and the speeches of Allied statesmen did not sound to them like a preparation for this peace.

The plain fact is that Russia has to face an economic collapse and to wrestle with political problems which would tax all her energy and try all her wisdom if peace came to-morrow. They cannot be postponed, and, if the war drags on, she may founder under their weight. Her present standing in the world's markets is measured by the fall of the rouble from 2s. to 11d. The drop in its purchasing power is still more serious; one rouble before the war was worth eight to-day in real values. Wages, to be sure, have also had a fabulous rise, but even at four or five times the old figure, they do not keep pace with the rise of prices. The peasantry are in a much worse plight than the town-workers, and the absence of the young men, the lack of seed, and the lack of implements have combined with the general disorganization to make famine a terrible possibility. Already, the Petrograd housewife in the workers' quarters must take her place overnight in the baker's queue. The land question awaits solution, but what kind of solution? The peasants are bent on having the land of the nobles, the monasteries, and the Crown; they have, indeed, taken it already. Is there to be State purchase at a fair figure? That means a further inflation of the debt and a further depreciation of the rouble. Is it to be expropriation without compensation? That means gross injustice to individuals, and a fatal rift in Russian society between socialists and non-socialists. Some order must be introduced into what the peasants have done, often with violence; but where is the machinery that can impose order? The police and the civil service have disappeared. Hardly less serious is the question of the nationalities. Finland expects independence after the war. The Ukraine had set up an independent Republic, and though it consented on the eve of this crisis to autonomy as a substitute, it stipulated for its separate national army. In this mood it lies uncomfortably close to the wavering Russian battle line and the advancing German armies. The Cadets stand for centralism, tempered by local self-government by counties (Zemstvos). The Socialists are for a Federal Republic, and the grant of full Home Rule to all the nationalities. Even in peace the choice between these two types of solution would be an anxious and difficult matter. In war a third possibility emerges. These nationalities, each cherishing past grievances, each aware of the future risk from reaction, see at the centre of the Empire disorder, instability, financial weakness. A series of military reverses might lead up to a third solution, the definite breaking away of the non-Russian provinces. So long as the war continues, what leisure of mind, what resources, what coolness of judgment can Russia command for the solution of these problems? She needs financial stability, but she must continue to pile up debt. The peasants call for ploughshares, but the forges must make swords. There is a new state to construct from the foundation, but all its organizing ability is absorbed in preparing war. There is need for thoughtful, far-sighted statesmanship, yet the Prime Minister, who must guide this thought, must dash from a Cabinet crisis to the broken front, spend his days in addressing mutinous soldiers, and his nights in coping with subversive plots. The Government has no legitimate authority till the

Constituent Assembly meets in October. When it meets all the wisdom of Russia will be absorbed in permanent work, which, if it were ill-done, would compromise the social and political future of Russia for a generation to come.

We have said enough to warrant our conclusion. The salvation of Russia depends on an early general peace. It is a witless levity which pretends that the demand for an early peace comes only from a handful of venal extremists. It is no saner to suppose that an army which has lost its discipline can be made into a victorious and conquering force merely by the shooting of deserters. We hope for a rally which will make a defensive stand before any vital loss has been sustained. That is the gigantic task before the heroic personality of Kerensky. It lies with Russia's Allies to do the rest. They have been slow to understand her demand for a revision of war-aims, and slow to respond to it. Kerensky's proclamation in the hour of crisis and disaster once more puts it forward in words whose urgency cannot be misunderstood. He bids his fellow-citizens expect a conference for the purpose no later than August, and reassures them by announcing that Russia will send to it democratic spokesmen as well as diplomatists. Leninism, in so far as it is murderous light-headed disorder, can be repressed. But the real anxiety which gave Leninism a certain momentary vogue must be satisfied. Russia has now got, if not a homogeneous Socialist Ministry, at least a Ministry dominated by the Socialist leaders Kerensky, Tseretelli, and Tchernoff, with an organized proletariat behind them. Such a Ministry cannot afford to fail at the Conference. They cannot come back from it with nothing better than the old ambiguities about annexations and partitions. A Socialist Premier cannot commit a Russia, which feels that its survival depends on early peace, to fight on for Western Imperialism. Russia will fight on only if Germany insists on conquests after the Allies have renounced them. What is at stake is not merely the solidarity of our alliance, but the whole destiny of Russia itself. If we haggle over tropical colonies and Mesopotamian swamps, we may doom to disaster the greatest experiment in freedom since the Bastille fell.

#### THE OXFORDSHIRE STANDARD.

"His wages are the lowest, his hours are the longest, and his prospects are the poorest offered to the worker in any great industry in the country."

"Not a single sheaf of corn should be carried to the landlord's or the parson's barn until the laborer has had bread enough and to spare for himself and his family."—Mr. Lloyd George at Pwllheli, December 22nd, 1913.

Four years ago, Mr. Lloyd George and certain of his supporters who are now Ministers thought that the wages of the agricultural laborer were a public scandal. The Report of the Land Inquiry Committee, appointed by the present Prime Minister, stated as a guilty and dishonorable fact that over 60 per cent. of the adult laborers received less than 18s. a week, and that there were from twenty to thirty thousand who received less than 16s. a week. This Report, signed by Mr. Ian Macpherson and Sir Robert Winfrey, whose names appear in the majority in Monday's division, recommended that "it should be an instruction to each wage tribunal that immediately, or within a short and defined period, wages should be fixed at least at such a sum as will enable the laborer to keep himself and an average family in a state of physical efficiency, and to pay a commercial rent for his cottage." It was reckoned at the time that such a wage could not be put at less than 20s. 6d. This was the minimum for decency.

Now, the Corn Production Bill, the work of this great reformer who put the laborers' wage above the farmer's takings and the landlord's rent, sets up a Wage Board, but it says nothing about instructing the Tribunals in this sense. On the other hand, it does prescribe a general minimum, and that minimum is actually lower than the figure cited in the Local Inquiry Report as representing the wages of the worst victims of this sweated industry. At that time it was

held to be a reproach to agriculture that twenty or thirty thousand workpeople received less than 16s. a week. To-day Parliament enacts, at the very moment of giving a handsome subsidy to farmer and landlord, that the wage of the laborer is not to fall below the worst standard in existence before the war. Twenty-five shillings now is the equivalent of fourteen shillings and sixpence in 1913. In the old days of the Poor Law subsidy to wages, magistrates used to talk of the "Northamptonshire scale" or the "Berkshire scale." Mr. Lloyd George will go down to history as the Prime Minister who adopted the "Oxfordshire scale" for the laborer. If he had explained four years ago that this was all he meant in his speeches at Limehouse and elsewhere, the country would have been spared a good deal of temper and strong language. Certain interesting rhetorical passages in which Mr. Prothero told us what the Duke of Bedford thought of Mr. Lloyd George, and Mr. Lloyd George replied by calling Mr. Prothero a flunkey, would have been lost to the literature of party politics. It would not have taken two years, but two weeks, for the Marconi incident to go to sleep. Even the landlords would have thought the Land Inquiry an innocent diversion, and both parties might have agreed upon a modest and sensible revolution. Nobody need tremble about hitching his wagon to so reasonable a star.

Unfortunately, there are some who feel that at a moment when we are engaged in a mortal struggle for the dreams of democracy there was something a little cold and disappointing in telling the world that the British people were resolved that nobody should be poorer than the men in the Oxfordshire villages were in 1913, poorer then, as the Report told us, than they had been in 1907. The fact that the men from these villages are giving their lives in the trenches seemed an argument for measures a little more heroic. Nor did the case seem the weaker because the nation was being invited to make an extraordinarily generous present to the farmer. Agriculture was to be guaranteed conditions of permanent prosperity and certain thoughtless Members of Parliament, with echoes of earlier speeches in their ears, proposed that the standard might be raised half-way to the figure which Mr. Lloyd George had in mind in 1913. What happened? Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Bonar Law, Lord Curzon, and Lord Milner warned the world that it would be a mistake to suppose that a patience which had endured many trials and provocations was positively inexhaustible, and that, in point of fact, this proposal was so outrageous that if the House of Commons pressed it, the Government would be forced to dissolve Parliament, and hold an election on the obsolete register. "We will stand what you like from profiteers, from shippers, from coal-owners, from contractors, from the owners of race-horses, but we draw the line at the agricultural laborer. We will set up a Mesopotamia tribunal one day and pull it down the next, as the House of Commons pleases. But when you ask us to allow you to put the agricultural laborer above the Oxfordshire standard, you come to a point of principle on which we cannot budge."

The remarkable thing is that no one can find in the speeches in the debate on this topic a single argument for this figure. Are farmers going to be worse off? Of course not. They are going to be better off than ever in their lives. The only reason given deserves a little scrutiny. It appears in the speech of the Attorney-General: "It may be right or it may be wrong, but does anybody say, after negotiations which have been carried on with infinite difficulty for weeks between the different interests affected, and when this figure has been arrived at after long discussion and negotiation, that at the last moment it can disturb the balance without not only imperilling, but also certainly destroying the whole Bill?" With whom were these negotiations conducted? Who represented the laborers? We have become accustomed to autocratic methods, but Sir F. E. Smith's language seems to be an admission that the Corn Production Bill represents a bargain between the Government on the one side and the landlords and farmers on the other—a bargain in which the vast majority of the people engaged in agriculture are at once vitally interested and absolutely ignored. And who, we may ask, repre-

sents the consumer in this bargain? If we are to give a guarantee on this scale to one class, the House of Commons should at least have some figures or evidence placed before it, and not merely be referred to a "bargain" or any other subterfuge of the party system.

It seems something of a mockery in the face of such a performance as this to appoint Commissioners to inquire into industrial unrest. We pacify Ireland by putting Sir Edward Carson in the Cabinet; we pacify munition workers by putting Mr. Winston Churchill in charge of the Ministry; we pacify the agricultural laborer by subsidizing farmers and landlords. The Report of the recent Commission lays great stress on the ill-feeling inspired by the suspicion that the Government are letting profiteers fleece the nation. The Government choose a curious method for disarming that suspicion. For our part, we believe that the Corn Production Bill must inevitably be followed by land nationalization, and that when the Army returns it will abolish by one method or another the land system which has reduced the country to its present plight. For the present it is enough to note how the Government cling to the very last to their belief that as long as they make terms with the powerful classes, they can safely disregard the claims of the agricultural laborer. Every man who was weak enough to yield to the threat which defeated Mr. Wardle's attempt to raise the laborer above the Oxfordshire level, will have to make his account with his constituents; and every voter who has a glimmering sense of citizenship, or of gratitude, will show what he thinks of their conduct.

#### THE EVER-MOUNTING WAR-BILL.

For the first time since the opening weeks of the war, we detect, both in Parliament and in the country, signs of real alarm about the financial situation. This is not so much due to the mere magnitude of the expenditure, disclosed last Tuesday in the Vote of Credit for the colossal sum of 650 millions, as to the recognition that the Treasury is being dragged impotent in the wake of a devouring war which knows no limit in its consumption of treasure any more than in its consumption of life. Mr. Law's speech was one of helplessness. Estimates in the proper sense there could not be, for each spending department has *carte blanche* and either cannot, or will not, declare beforehand how much it intends to spend. We are therefore, as the Chancellor confessed, thrown back on guesswork. Now, it is just here that our alarm begins. For guessing may be skilled or unskilled, good or bad. Now, the experience of three years of war shows us that the guessing both of Mr. Law and of his predecessors has been bad. And the badness has always been of the same kind—a grave under-statement of what is likely to happen. But Mr. Law's guessing has been by far the worst, and what is more, the nature of his *ex post facto* explanations convicts him of singular incompetence in handling financial probabilities and inevitable tendencies. His Budget estimate of an average expenditure of £5,411,000 has been exceeded during the 112 days that have elapsed by no less than £1,384,000. The actual expenditure has been £6,795,000 a day. What is the use of telling us that the excess is due to unexpected demands for munitions, loans to Allies, and other miscellaneous matters? Must it not be obvious that the constant addition of new controlled establishments, the setting-up of new administrative machinery, the unceasing rise of wages and of prices of materials, would automatically increase the cost of war? Was there any real reason to suppose that, as soon as America came in, she would say to our Government, "You have borne the burden of financing the Allies long enough; hand it all over to me"? Yet one or two pathetic passages in Mr. Law's speech suggested that he was led astray by this innocent belief. No doubt America is making ready to bring her abounding resources of men, materials, and money to bear upon the conduct of the war. But there is every reason to believe that the enormous scale of her own preparations will leave little surplus of national finance for relieving British burdens.

Mr. McKenna struck home to the realities of the situation when he showed that, before the close of the present financial year, we should be upon a basis of expenditure of not less than 8 millions a day. For the additional expenses not taken into account in the Vote of Credit, such as the interest on the debt and other services, would by that time have risen to the sum of a million a day. It seems tolerably certain that by the end of next March our national indebtedness for war will be raised to the sum of nearly 6,000 millions, involving an annual payment of some 330 millions for interest and a sinking fund reckoned at the low figure of 1 per cent. Mr. Law tried to comfort the House with the assertion that we could continue this appalling extravagance longer than our enemies, and that it would not be want of money that would stand in the way of victory. Both of these assertions seem to us doubtful and dangerous. Though Germany is confronted with internal financial difficulties which will ripen into terrible emergencies when the war is over, she has none the less managed to keep her war expenses on a lower level than ours, and can probably continue, as well as we, to postpone the day of reckoning. As to the other assertion, Mr. McKenna very forcibly exposed its fatuity when he dwelt upon the perilous reactions of inflated war-borrowings upon the industrial unrest which is everywhere discernible throughout the country.

How, for example, will this 650 millions be got? Not for the most part from taxation, or by such borrowing as implies the saving of consumption on the part of traders. It will be raised by going to the bankers and financiers and inducing them to fabricate fresh masses of credit with which they will buy Treasury Bills or Exchequer Bonds. But this is mere inflation, which, as Mr. McKenna showed, must continue to raise prices both for the general public and for the Government. To meet the higher price of living thus produced, demands even more urgent must arise for higher wages on the one hand, and for guaranteed minimum prices on the other. An apt example is to hand in the 9d. loaf which the Government has promised to the people. That can only be given by subsidizing the farmers to the tune of something like 38 millions a year, unless, as Mr. McKenna suggested, the Government commandeered the farmer's wheat at 60s., instead of paying the current price of 76s. But this 38 millions will itself be raised by more borrowing, which once more will raise prices and evoke a further demand for Government subsidies. So the vicious circle is once more closed. This trouble all arises from neglecting the laws of sound finance. Much of the evil is irremediable. No serious attempt has been made by the House of Commons, whose business it was, either to enforce economy upon the spending departments, or to raise the money in such ways as would compel the nation to curtail private in favor of public consumption. Vast sums of public money have been squandered in ways that are familiar to every informed business man, and, until a few weeks ago, the Government, aided and abetted by the House of Commons, obstructed successfully every attempt to restore some measure of financial control. If the Committee which Colonel Godfrey Collins has at last procured, sets seriously to work, it may do something better than merely lock the stable-door when the steed is stolen. It may help to check the new crop of follies and extravagances accompanying what we hope may be the last stage of the war, and devise useful steps for securing a sane finance for the processes of demobilization and reconstruction when they come.

But even more urgent is the need for a policy of deflation, *i.e.*, for expelling from the monetary system of the country the huge burden of unreal money and indebtedness which has been brought into being. In view of the latest revelation of the financial position, we once more press upon the Government and the nation the immediate application of the combined policy of a doubled income tax and a levy upon capital. In view of the taxation which, as Mr. McKenna showed, would be required to pay the interest on the mountain of war debts, we believe that many men of property would gladly welcome an attempt to achieve by a single act of sacrifice a large reduction of the

future burden. Let the Government announce that on January 1st next, or some other early date, all properties of over £1,000 in value shall be assessed as for Estate Duties, and that payment be received either in cash, in War Scrip, or in other negotiable securities. It is probable that the sum obtainable, upon the existing scale for Death Duties, would amount to not much short of 1,000 millions. If that sum were not enough, the scale should be raised, with a steeper grading on the larger fortunes. A continuance of the war should involve a periodical application of the levy. This should prevent an accumulation of indebtedness which would involve for generations to come a taxation so oppressive as to strangle industry, fix poverty upon large masses of the population, and provoke revolution. Large masses of war-made wealth have escaped taxation. It is equitable that as much as possible of these and other unearned forms of wealth should be taken to meet the emergencies of the nation.

#### THE MILITARY OUTLOOK.

If we were to judge the military situation at present by our dominant mood we should be compelled to regard it as distinctly bad. The reasons for such a conclusion are not easy to determine. The mood is older than the Russian retreat in Galicia. It was born even before the tactical setback on the Yser. Neither its genesis nor its reasons are definite; and we shall be nearer the truth in attributing it to our victories than to our failures. It seems to be a cord of many strands; but the chief of them is, undoubtedly, the apparent inconsiderableness of the effect of our two great successes in this year's campaign. The history of the campaign has been disconcerting from the first. It began with small though vigorous attacks on the Bapaume salient. It was inevitable that we should fill in the first tentative outlines of the plan, and visualize a gradual working up into a titanic struggle, in which the balance of the odds pointed to a complete breach in the German line. But hardly had the picture become definite than we were confronted by an action of the enemy which proved him to be quite conversant with the possibilities of the situation. He began and completed his great retreat, and with it we entered upon a development of the war to which the past affords the least trustworthy guide. In three weeks, while we were knocking at the doors of St. Quentin and looking from afar on Cambrai, we suddenly completed one of the most successful limited offensives imaginable. But this again gave us no sure ground for predicting the future. There began that long dormant and confused wrangle in the Scarpe Valley, towards Douai and Cambrai. The French offensive came at the opening of this period, with its real gains and convincing losses. Then, again, we were surprised by another perfect example of the local offensive, and the sequel has been another barren period of hope deferred.

At the beginning and at the end of great wars there is always this Sphinx-like spirit brooding over the situation. The getting in of the last as of the first blow is a matter of such extraordinary importance that it would be strange indeed if the mere spectator could read all the signs of its preparation, and determine its strength and the point of application. There is no question of Germany winning a decisive military victory; but we have every German warrant for thinking the enemy apprehensive as to the possibilities on our side. We cannot review the situation without considering Russia, and yet it is difficult to form any convincing picture of the development of the war in the East. It is as difficult, indeed, as to see how it can benefit Germany. We may be certain of one thing. Germany has no wish to shoulder indeterminate military responsibilities in the East when she is clearly anxious about the West. If there is no power in Russia to make war, there is none to make peace; and hence the ideal state for Germany under the present circumstances would have been to let things alone and merely defend when attacked. That she has attacked is probably a sign of her nervousness as to the offensive powers of the Russian Army and the internal situation in Austria. But even the most

peaceful offensive must consume some forces, and at the moment Germany can ill afford them. If we imagine the greatest German success, it can only carry the wearied soldiers further from their home bases, further from the chance of succouring their fellows in the West at need, to new labors and new struggles and to new surprises. If Germany should cause the striving elements to coalesce, she would have bartered her good defensive positions for that open warfare in which Brusiloff is a past-master. The Russian situation is indefinite; but it has not appreciably worsened the Allies' military position. The only consideration, indeed, that could justify the German advance is that the enemy does not intend to fight another winter, and thinks peace either inevitable or to be brought about by the submarine campaign. In such circumstances it might seem a reasonable gamble to gain all the successes possible, and so enter the Conference secured against crushing terms.

We may then consider the military situation apart from Russia. If she should unite against the invader, we should gain; if she should remain in final disunion, we should not lose. The worst element with which we have to deal is the submarine campaign; but it seems impossible, at this point, to think that its effect can be decisive. We have now a long series of statistics, and they show that the attacks and the successful attacks are both falling, although the number which gives the vessels exposed to risk is consistently rising. The week of highest casualties was in April. The week of the greatest risks was in June, when the casualties had fallen considerably. We may then conclude that the submarine campaign will not have a decisive influence unless some unforeseen and hitherto undisclosed factor intervenes. The German hopes, if built upon this—and there is some evidence that they are—are doomed to disappointment. Indeed, we might find ourselves over-optimistic if we built upon the examination of German hopes. The submarine campaign, as at present conducted, may cause us some hardship; but it cannot have any military effect upon the war. Our effort in the field will not be less. But it is here that we come to grips with the problem. There is evidence that the Germans are more alive to the vital elements of the situation than we are. They have shown more initiative in the air than the Allied airmen, though it must never be forgotten that rarely a day passes that we have not bombed some point of military importance with so great a weight of explosives that considerable damage must be done. But the Germans were able to inflict a local defeat upon our troops on the Yser by the use of their airmen when reasonable foresight with a sufficiency of the proper type of aeroplanes should have made such a *coup* impossible. It is, of course, ludicrous to speak of the success as strategic, except in a sense which robs the word of all special meaning. A loss of 1,600 yards on a terrain which can be smothered in shell, and is at this moment tenantless because of the bombardment, can have no serious effect upon our plans. It is disturbing under the circumstances, and no more.

Nor is the comparative inaction of the front a sign of weakness. Between the battles of Vimy Ridge and of Messines Ridge two months elapsed, and yet there had been a long preparation for an offensive towards Messines before Vimy Ridge had sprung to the immediate foreground. Everything has gone to show that even in the limited offensive there must be the most minute and thorough preparation if lives are not to be thrown away. If, then, we are to judge by the past, and isolate the military from the political situation, no new offensive is due. This is mere conjecture. All that we know is that no preparation can be too thorough, and that if our objectives are what many believe them to be, they are worth unusually careful preparation. But it is this fact that tends to cause disappointment, since by a simple arithmetical calculation we at once arrive at the number of offensives to expect this season, and if the result is to be merely the same as that of the last, we are no nearer a decision. Yet, if we study the situation from the German side, we shall be compelled to conclude that they, at any rate,

regard the coming offensive as more formidable than the others. It needs no special insight to read a significance into the gun duel in Flanders and the German *coup* on the coast. The Germans are clearly doing all they can to make impossible or of no effect an advance on the coast sector. Yet, if that should be our plan, it is plainly bound to be combined with assistance from the sea, and the strategic developments might be considerable.

Such an offensive, in any case, would fall upon a new situation in the West. The French have imposed a steadfast resistance to the continued attacks of the Germans on the Chemin des Dames. The extraordinary violence of the attacks of last week-end only gave the enemy momentary advantages, and he would be compelled to meet a renewed offensive on the British front with the losses from this series of attacks above the Aisne and the knowledge of their ineffectualness. The Italian front cannot be depleted to ease the German liabilities in the East, and hence the line in Flanders and France must bear its own burdens. The situation is, therefore, tilted forward, with its centre of gravity a little ahead, and so far as we can read it gives no ground for depression.

## A London Diary.

LONDON, FRIDAY.

AT last the great controversy in Germany has begun. It is too soon to say what forces stand behind the majority vote in the Reichstag. But whodoubt's that they represent a powerful, a growing, an eventually dominant peace party? In effect, I imagine they approach the Austrian terms which Herr Erzberger carried back from Vienna. These also stand for a peace of "reconciliation" and for the complete evacuation and restoration of Belgium, though they couple with this a proposal for an Allied contribution to the Reparation Fund. All the other questions (including the Colonies and Alsace-Lorraine) they would leave to the Conference. These Austrian terms, again, are not identical with the Michaelis terms. But they represent an advance so substantial that the basis of a European Conference would seem to have been found, resting in turn on the rendering in the German resolution of the Asquith-Gladstone idea of an Organization of Public Right (Rechtsorganisationen). Why not summon it?

YET all these approaches are swept aside or ignored by our Jingoes and our timid, hesitating statesmen. The emancipation of Belgium is in sight. No matter; *The war must go on*. The German democracy, enlightened by its visit to Stockholm, is seen to be moving, and to be drawing the new German Chancellor within its orbit. *The war must go on*. The competing peace formulas are coming together, until they almost reach the American and the Russian embodiments of them. *The war must go on*. The peril of a German mastery of Europe—military, economic, political—has disappeared. *The war must go on*. The Russian Revolution may perish in the absence of a reasonably early peace, and the war for liberty extinguish the greatest work of liberty of our times. *The war must go on*. The armies and the peoples want peace. *The war must go on*. Millions of boys have been killed or mutilated for life. *The war must go on*. There is grave danger of a food shortage in 1918. *The war must go on*. It is urgent to arrange within a measurable period a scheme for the supply and control of the world's raw materials. *The war must go on*. Europe is already within sight of industrial and financial trouble hardly distinguishable from revolution. *The war must go on*.

I DON'T think the last chapter has yet been written in the Strange History of Mr. George, the Agricultural Laborer, and the Minimum Wage. That should duly appear in the legible script which the British electorate is accustomed to write. What I do not understand is the Liberal Party's fright at the bluffing threat of a General Election. If I had been a Liberal leader, I hope

I might have risen to the very modest height of such an occasion. I should have whispered something like the following. If I had been very brave, I might even have shouted it: "Very well, Mr. George. You would appeal to Hodge; go to him! Tell him that you, the statesman who four years ago thought 20s. 6d. a week barely enough for him, now propose to shake the kingdom in the midst of a great war because your landlord and farmer friends don't find it convenient to establish him on a basis of about 18s. If that is a true level of social conscience and patriotism, exhibit it to the world and the British democracy!" However, all's well that ends tolerably well. In one stroke Mr. George has presented safe seats to 102 members of the House of Commons. At least, I should describe the electoral stock of the 102 as a gilt-edged security compared with that of the 201.

THE accession of Mr. Churchill and Mr. Montagu has been much advertised. But there is a new Minister on whom more vital issues hang than on either. That is the First Lord. Does Sir Eric Geddes go to the Admiralty as a reformer? I find that question much pondered. Few good sailors are satisfied with the Admiralty as it exists. Their verdict is that, on the whole, and with all its faults, the Army is the more modern and adaptable weapon. Their quarrel with the present disposition of the Admiralty is, in a word, want of prevision, their specific remedy the creation, out of the Operations Division, of a real thinking department composed of the various commands. Mr. Churchill tried to organize a War Staff for the Navy in 1912. The idea was admirably designed and adumbrated, but it never came to substantial fruit. The story of that failure is, with brilliant qualifying episodes, the story of the naval war. Sir Eric Geddes has, I imagine, the kind of organizing head out of which such a body might spring, and there is a deep, if unspoken, anxiety to see him use it.

THE Irish Convention has found (I believe by a unanimous vote) its right chairman in Sir Horace Plunkett. He is essentially its representative man. He is not an Irish leader so much as a leader of leaders. He is in touch with all parties, in full communion with none. One of the great Irish divisions can claim him as the most sympathetic of Home Rulers and hardly disturb the counter-description of him as the most enlightened of Unionists. He has done a great deal for Ireland, and yet talked as much as was needful for it. If temper, knowledge, intellectual suavity, high character, and a passion for settlement can help the Convention, it has got these gifts at its disposal in the person of its chairman.

WHAT the "Times" says:—

"The maiden speech of Herr Michaelis as German Chancellor reflects the circumstances of his appointment. He was the candidate, as we stated yesterday, of the 'militarist' industrialists, who have reared their colossal fortunes largely upon the prestige of German arms. He has obtained office, as the 'Berliner Tageblatt' complains, without the co-operation of Parliament, other than in the shape of a meeting in Herr Helfferich's garden between the Chancellor-elect and the leaders of the Centre, the National Liberals, the Radicals, and the 'tame' Socialists and of a gathering summoned through channels which lie outside all constitutional institutions."

WHAT the "Cologne Gazette" might have said:—

"The maiden speech of Mr. George as British Prime Minister reflects the circumstances of his appointment. He was the candidate, as we stated yesterday, of the militarists and the millionaires, who have reared their colossal fortunes largely on the prestige of English arms. He has obtained office, as the 'Daily News' complains, without the co-operation of Parliament, other than in the shape of a meeting in his garden in Downing Street between his present Chancellor of the Exchequer and the leaders of the Conservatives, the tame Labor men, and a handful of Liberal Imperialists — a gathering summoned through channels which lie outside all constitutional institutions."

MANY thousands of hearts have been wrung by the great scandal of the re-examinations, from which Mr. Shortt, Mr. Pringle, and Mr. Hogge have conducted so brilliant a rescue. But that is only a bye-product of the thoughtlessness which is at once the soul of unkindness and its excuse. Take one example. Thousands of boys are now being drafted abroad. The summons comes at any hour for any destination, however distant. The other day a great body of very young recruits were appointed for overseas service, the starting point of which was a great London terminus. The mothers flocked there, bringing their small gifts and tokens of farewell. The recruits were all de-trained at a suburban station, and despatched from there to the seaport. The mothers wept, saying, "They take our children, and don't even let us say good-bye to them." This is no fable; I had it from an eye-witness and sufferer.

THERE is a suggestive story of the meeting of the Conference on War Prisoners. The Germans made their appearance to the moment. The Conference stood expectant. But not one of the British representatives appeared. The neutrals grew visibly uneasy. Would the meeting collapse? A few minutes later, the British came in, Lord Newton introducing them with the cheerful jest that the British Empire was always a little late. Laughter followed, and a good Conference. I hope the story is true.

A WAYFARER.

## Life and Letters.

### WEST-END WITCHCRAFT.

WIZARDS dwell no more in squalid attics beneath the stairs, nor are caves and forest hovels the habitation of witches. It is not with the Evil One that, believing in their own inequity, they now hold commune, and kings no longer speculate what demon rides their haggard souls, ever urging them onward to a merited death among blazing faggots. In the wealthiest highways of our Metropolis the latter-day wizards and witches are congregated now—in streets mainly devoted to the different luxuries of hairdressing, perfumery, jewelry, and arts. There they hold their magic conclaves. There they peer into the unknown. There they teach the trembling client, possessed by vain curiosity, to watch the writing hand controlled by unearthly power, to foretell the future fate from the wrinkles of a palm, to hear the messages of the spiritual world rapped out by moving furniture, and to gaze for God into the depths of crystal globes. There they don the witching robes, and diffuse the incense of stupefaction. There they draw the lucre of an ethereal trade.

It is nothing new. When a former Empire had reached the limits of the world, had absorbed the wealth of Oriental millions, and bedizened her City's palaces with artistic adornments purveyed, in wanton confusion, from cultured and barbaric lands, the hearts of the wealthy, sated with sensuous possession, turned to intangible excitements. The ritual of ancestral piety appeared but a tedious routine, and its religious precepts, ordaining the decencies of patriarchal conduct, were consigned to schoolboys and agriculturalists. The antiquated faith in divine beings, who were almost identical with laws, might serve to restrain the troublesome exuberance of childhood, or, with its promises of future well-being, to impose a happy caution upon working-class revolt. But the piety of conduct and the primitive ceremonials of a Saturnian age no longer suited the lords and ladies of the world. For them the starveling Greek devised Pythagorean wonders. For them the Chaldaean cast the horoscope, calculating the character of each, less from the gossip of baths and brothels than from the position of sublime planets at the natal hour. There the haruspex, deep in Etruscan lore, foreboded terrestrial fate, and Mithras, with mystic sun and sacrificial bull, supplanted the clarity of Apollo. In place of fertile Saturn and Jove and thrifty Minerva, the dog-faced gods and cats of

Egypt stalked through the City; light-hearted ladies excused the generosity of their affections under the cloak of mysterious Isis and the Sidonian soothsayer invented miracles beyond the credence of a Jew.

So there is nothing new in such appeals as rise from Bond Street and Regent Street, conjuring the marvellous and occult. With an eye upon the temptations of Babylon, the Hebrew prophet, faithful among the faithless, called to his people: "Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators stand up and save thee from the things that shall come upon thee." In times of luxury or of terror, curiosity or fear or love drives mankind to supernatural knowledge or comfort by means of magic or spiritualistic arts. And if it is not exactly knowledge, at all events it is often comfort that they find. Saul, it is true, got no comfort when, driven by fear, he stole in disguise to the witch who had a familiar spirit and lived at Endor. She called up Samuel's ghost, in the shape of an old man covered with a mantle, but he foretold nothing but death and disaster, so that Saul fell all along upon the earth, and refused to eat till the witch had cooked him her fat calf and unleavened bread. But he paid her nothing either for the food or for the skill of her familiar spirit, and certainly our own witches and wizards afford much better consolation for their fees. We do not know precisely what the charges are in the magic circle or spiritual trade-union which labors at recalling ghosts, but the result of the necessary expenditure is sometimes very consolatory. One remembers how heartily Anatole France, in his essay on "L'hypnotisme dans la Littérature," congratulated one of our leading authorities in physical science for having realized the dream of his life by resurrecting a genuine spirit, whom he called Katie King:

"Il aimait un démon," Anatole France writes of our most distinguished physicist, "qui paraissait à son appel, agitait pour lui les parfums de sa chevelure blonde, et lui faisait sentir à travers sa tiède poitrine les battements de son cœur angélique. Le doux démon consentit à être photographié par son terrestre et savant ami, qui obtint quarante-quatre clichés."

The essayist goes on to say that, judged from the photograph which he had before him, Katie King's spirit had known how to envelop itself in a charming form. And, indeed, we fully admit that the description which the physicist himself gave of her was delightful, not to say alluring. It was as different as can possibly be imagined from the old man in a mantle who appeared to Saul.

Whether it was curiosity or love that summoned the ghost of Katie King from another world, we need not here conjecture, though we suppose it was curiosity, since our great physicist does not appear to have been acquainted with her in this present life. Certainly, it cannot have been fear—not fear like Saul's—and one can only think her discoverer happy in the result of his scientific investigation. There was once a feminine spirit called Julia who concluded a similarly agreeable companionship with a prominent journalist, and supplied him with Mr. Gladstone's contemporary opinions upon terrestrial politics; but, we believe, she was never photographed, so that we cannot definitely appreciate her charm. In such delicious encounters with the spiritual world as these a certain amount of curiosity, as we hinted, may have been mingled; a certain amount of curiosity is often mingled with more corporeal relationships. But in our present pitiless and tragic time, love and fear alone urge to another world the appeal of unconquerable longing or heart-breaking fear. When a beloved son is exposed to sudden death from minute to minute, month after month, the mother who bore him finds comfort in the magician's prayer. Just as the working woman burns a taper at a shrine, and counts it for greater surety if she burns two in honor of St. Anthony, so the wealthy mother pays for the magician's prayers. Has she not heard that between the legs of a man for whom such a fee was paid, a shell burst harmless? The might of the magician's prayer in London intervened in Flanders to ward off destruction, and shall she hesitate to risk a ten-pound note against death for her dear one's preservation? The cash is paid; steered by suitable enchantments

the prayer wings its way, straight as an aeroplane, through wind and rain; hitherto the darling boy is safe; what further proof of efficacy could blasphemers ask?

Or if, in spite of all, the son is killed, as a thousand others are, the same unconquerable love demands some intercourse with the departed soul. Some comfort may even then be found from stamping tables or moving hands which bring from him a message, no matter how halting, trivial, or obscure. It is balm to a parent's wounded heart when the lost inheritor of so many hopes is heard through the subconscious medium explaining how, in the laboratories of the spirit world, they manufacture airy cigars and whisky and sodas, not from solid matter, as on earth, but out of essences and ethers and gases.

If success is to be the test of truth; if a belief which brings with it consolation and a kind of happiness is to be accepted as true—as a pragmatic or working truth—who is to rebuke such necromancy? Those who would penetrate the mysteries may fearlessly approach them in the mood described by Mr. Sludge:—

"Sludge begins  
At your entreaty with your dearest dead,  
The little voice set lisping once again,  
The tiny hand made feel for yours once more,  
The poor lost image brought back, plain as dreams,  
Which image, if a word had chanced recall,  
The customary cloud would cross your eyes,  
Your heart return the old tick, pay its pang!  
A right mood for investigation, this!  
One's at one's ease with Saul and Jonathan,  
Pompey and Caesar: but one's own lost child . . ."

To passionate unreason, no doubt, much may be forgiven; even the lack of reason, our surest guide, though passion may run quicker. But for ourselves there is enough of earthly and of spiritual marvel to be discovered in this world without the costly aid of astrologers, spirit-rappers, and necromantic witches. That this burning fragment of a star, flung at so great a distance away from the sun, and there secured, should have produced such a thing as reason upon its cooling surface, would be miracle enough, if miracles are sought. In those "blank misgivings of a Creature moving about in worlds not realized," we find deeper cause for wonder than in the throbbing of a spiritualistic banjo, although assured that the ghost of Beethoven himself were called up to play it. That man should be brutish, violent, lustful, murderous, may cause no surprise; but the thought of his kindness, self-restraint, reason, and capacity for beauty overwhelms us with astonishment more completely than a wilderness of ghosts. In one of his most brilliant essays ("The Free Man's Worship"), Mr. Bertrand Russell has these words:—

"To take into the inmost shrine of the soul the inevitable forces whose puppets we seem to be—Death and change, the irrevocableness of the past, and the powerlessness of man before the blind hurry of the universe from vanity to vanity—to feel these things and know them is to conquer them."

It is a Stoic doctrine, but even in Stoicism the mystery of the soul is interwoven. And there lies a whole world of tenderness from which flow more consolations than West End witchcraft can supply. We would not shut out the whole world of psychic phenomena. But we should like to exclude the traders in them.

#### MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH.

EVERYBODY is aware, in a general way, of the terrible toll which the war is levying upon the populations of the fighting nations. Speculative statisticians have been busily engaged from the early months of the conflict in counting the dead and in estimating how long the enemy can hold out. A few biologists and sociologists have sought also to arouse their respective countries to a realization of what they term the "dysgenic" effect of war upon the race. The longer the war goes on the larger the number and the proportion of the sound and vigorous male stock that is killed off or disabled, and the

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larger the proportion of the next generation which must proceed from a weak or defective fatherhood. So in every belligerent country the stock of health and vigor is permanently lowered. This qualitative consideration, however, though in the long run of paramount importance, is subordinated for the time being to the horror and peril which the vast scale of the destruction of life impresses on our mind. Nor do we realize the full magnitude of this loss merely by taking count of the casualties. For there are two other important ways in which war strikes at the vitals of humanity. One is by its reaction on the birth-rate, the other by its damaging effect upon the general health and vitality of the civil population.

Some very valuable light is shed upon these all-important matters by a monograph recently issued by a Danish Society for the Study of the Social Consequences of the War. Taking its material from the best available official resources, it presents a detailed statistical computation of the effects of the war upon the size and composition of the populations of Germany and France during the first two and a-half years of the war, with further estimates of a more speculative nature covering the three years now completed.

While the loss of life among the armed forces of the countries, of course, began in August, 1914, the effect upon the birth-rate only began to manifest itself in 1915. In estimating mortality, our authors do not rely upon the deceptive figures of the war-reports, but upon the State and urban statistics, which for this purpose are far more valuable. They are by these means able to show, in the case of Germany, that the increase of deaths of persons older than one year over what would have occurred under peace conditions amounted to 1,157,000 up to the end of 1916, "the majority, over one million, certainly being direct war losses." During the same period the loss by reduction of the birth-rate was even larger, amounting to about 1,177,000, a figure which, however, does not cover the aggregate real loss under this head, which demand a further nine months for completion. "The *real* loss of births in the twenty-nine war months amounted, during the first year, to 36 per cent.; during the second year to 45 per cent.; during the further five months, according to estimates, to about 50 per cent. That makes a total figure of 1,872,460. Thus the real loss of population up to the end of 1916 amounts to almost 2,900,000." Carrying these figures forward to the limit of the three years, an aggregate loss of life is given in round figures at 3,700,000, or, in other words, "In normal times the population of Germany within the last three years should have increased from 67·8 millions to about 70·2 millions, but owing to the war it will have decreased to about 66·5 millions."

One obvious and important effect is to alter the numerical proportion of the sexes, and so to disable millions of women from marriage and maternity after the war is over. After three years of war the proportion of men to women will be about 1,000 to 1,100. But the proportion for the population of marriageable age will be much greater, and this computation takes no account of the immense number of disabled men of military age. In considering the question of infant mortality and the birth-rate in Germany, one has to bear in mind two facts; first, that the pre-war birth-rate had already from the beginning of the century undergone a sensible decline, as in the case of all other Western nations, and that the infant mortality, though also declining, was considerably higher in the pre-war years in Germany than in many other countries. A somewhat unexpected result of war conditions has been a progressive reduction of the infantile mortality in the years 1915, 1916, attributed by our authors, partly, to favorable climatic conditions, and partly to improved official and private care, evolved and facilitated by the decline of the birth-rate.

Apart from the men that are killed and the infants that are not born, there is the general effect of the toil, privations, and anxieties of war to be taken into consideration. The mortality rate for the civilian population has been definitely raised by war, as is proved by all available statistics of such diseases as tuberculosis, typhus, and nervous diseases. We may append the

following striking summary of the effect of three years of war upon the German population:

Increase of mortality in persons over one year ... ... ...	about	1,436,000
Decrease of infant mortality ... ...	"	225,000
Increase of total mortality ... ...	"	1,211,000
Decrease of birth-rate ... ...	"	2,482,000
Total loss of population ... ...	"	3,693,000

For France the same amount of full official information is not available, and our authors have to build their calculations upon a more limited number of returns, chiefly relating to Paris, and some ten more or less representative towns. In a former bulletin they had, however, assigned a figure, 885,000, as the number of slain men in the first two years of war, though Professor Gide gives a higher figure of about one million. In the third year they confess to a further loss of some 440 to 550 thousands, including, however, a considerable number of Colonial troops.

The effect of such losses upon the balance of sexes and the marriage rate must be even more disastrous for France than for Germany, since the proportion of killed to the total male marriageable population is considerably greater. Whereas before the war the predominance of the women in the age groups (19-49 years) was 1,018 to 1,000 men, it must now stand at 1,202 to 1,000, or six women to five men. But even this by no means expresses the full effect of the war damage, for it leaves out of account the many hundreds of thousands of wounded who will live unfit for marriage and parenthood. Nor does it include the terrible ravages of venereal diseases, affecting nearly two million men, if we take for our basis of computation the figures for 1906 given in the British Army Report for 1910.

When such figures of the direct damage of war are supplemented by statistics of the further decline of marriage and birth-rate in a country where before the war the population barely held its own, we seem to contemplate the approaching death of the nation which has, perhaps, contributed more than any other to the higher and more valuable arts of modern civilization. The literal struggle for life has long been waged in the different districts. In 1913, the balance of compartments with a "birth surplus" or a "death surplus" was nearly level, forty compartments showing a growth of population, thirty-seven a decline. We now learn that "already at the conclusion of the first year of the war only two departments in the whole of France were left in which the living vitality of the people was stronger than the power of the forces of extermination." Taking France as a whole, the first year of war showed a record of 143,229 more deaths than births. But what of the second and the third years? The war may come to a "successful end." The country France may be enlarged by her restored provinces. But where will be her sons?

## Music.

### MOZART WITH MOZART LEFT OUT.

EVERYONE who has seen the new production of Figaro's Wedding at Drury Lane will agree that it is quite the most delightful entertainment in London. It may without exaggeration be described as ravishing. To all Londoners who are at their last shilling and are perplexed as to how to spend it most economically I say unhesitatingly, Spend it at the Drury Lane pay box when next Figaro is in the bill. Can a critic say more? Can a gentleman say less?

And yet see what has just occurred. An able musical critic, well known to the readers of these columns, and with every reason to make the utter best of Sir Thomas Beecham's enterprise (as indeed what lover of music has not?) volunteers the curious suggestion that Sir Thomas should revive the operas of Paisiello and Cimarosa, in order to teach the public that what they are admiring and enjoying in the Drury Lane performance is a sweetness and a neatness, a neatness and

discreteness (pardon the vile jingle) that belongs to all the best XVIII. century composers no less than to Mozart. This is a shot that hits Sir Thomas between wind and water. It means that he has given us the charm of the XVIII century, but not that strange spell by virtue of which Mozart, being dead, yet liveth, whilst Paisiello and Cimarosa are in comparison as dead as mutton. It means that the same success might have been achieved by a revival of Paisiello.

The wily critic aforesaid has no difficulty in illustrating his suggestion by citing several numbers in Mozart's opera which might have been written by any of his popular contemporaries without adding a leaf to their now withered laurels. If you doubt it, turn to Don Giovanni, and pretend, if you can, that the contemporary specimens preserved in the supper scene by the Don's restaurant band are any worse than, or even distinguishable in style from "Ricevete O padroncina" or any of the numbers mentioned in Mr. Newman's article. The truth is that the XVIII. century produced a good deal of the loveliest art known to us; and any of its masterpieces adequately presented to us now could not fail to make us ashamed of our own violent and vulgar attempts to entertain ourselves. When you are enchanted at Drury Lane, you must not say "What a wonderful man Mozart was!" but "What a wonderful century Mozart lived in!" and so it was, for persons of quality, comfortably mounted on the backs of the poor.

Turn now to the XVIII. century opinion of Mozart. Far from finding his contemporaries listening with half-closed eyes to his delicious strains of melody, and to the melting supertonic cadence that Wagner made fun of in Die Meistersinger, you are stunned and amazed by complaints of the horrible noisiness of his instrumentation, of having to climb an arid mountain of discord to pluck a single flower of melody, of "the statue in the orchestra and the pedestal on the stage," of "too many notes," of assaults on the human ear and the human tendency to slumber in the stalls after dinner. They suggest the Tannhäuser fiasco in Paris in 1860 or the reception of Ibsen's Ghosts in London in 1890 rather than "Voi che sapete" and "Deh vieni a la finestra." What has become of all this disturbing power? In the case of Tannhäuser we can explain it by the fact that we have only lately become quite accustomed to the unprepared major ninths which made the joyous music of Elizabeth sound so horrible to our grandfathers' ears. But the harmonies which disgruntled Mozart's contemporaries were not new. Mozart could take the common chord and make you jump by just doubling the third in the base; or he could put the hackneyed discord of the dominant seventh in a form so cunningly distributed and instrumented that it would sound as if it came straight from hell or from the Elysian fields across the Ionian Sea, according to his purpose. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that as far as mere grammar and vocabulary go, there is nothing more in the statue scene from Don Juan, which threw open the whole magic realm of modern orchestration first explored by Mozart's forerunner Gluck, than in the exquisite little song of Cherubino "Non so piu." All the effects are still there, as fresh, and, on occasion, as terrible as the day they were composed: handle them properly, and Lohengrin and Tristan will taste like soothing syrup after them. Unfortunately nobody seems able to handle them properly. After a long experience of many conductors and many composers, I have come to the conclusion that Mozart and Berlioz are, among the moderns, by far the most elusive and difficult in performance.

As I am only half a critic now, I act up to that character by going to only half an opera at a time. As in the case of Il Trovatore, I did not see the first two acts of Figaro's Wedding. When I entered, Sir Thomas Beecham struck up, by way of instrumental prelude to the third act, the fandango (at least Mozart, who had never been in Spain and can certainly never have heard a note of Spanish music, called it a fandango) from the wedding scene. What Mozart would have said if he had heard himself thus held up as a miserable nineteenth century composer, so barren of invention as to have to fall back on tunes out of his opera for preludes, I will

not try to imagine, though I hope he would simply have expressed a mild wish that people would not do silly things. However, I was not sorry to hear the fandango twice; and I suppose nobody else was, in spite of the bad form involved. Only I began instantly to suspect that Sir Thomas is very fond of XVIII. century music and does not care twopence about the specific Mozart. When the great duet came presently, he treated the few eloquent notes of exordium as if they were merely pianist's chords to fix the key; and of the wonderful opening-out of feeling which comes with the first words of Susanna I could not detect a trace. The first section was just dapper and nothing else: not until the concerted part came did the conductor warm to it. But the conclusive test was the sextet following Figaro's discovery of his parentage. How fine a piece of music that is, and how much it makes of a rather trivial though affectionate situation! Sir Thomas will never know until he has fulfilled his destiny by conducting some of Mozart's greatest church music: say the grand Mass in C which lay so long undiscovered. Nothing came of the sextet, absolutely nothing at all: it might just as well have been omitted, as it was by the Carl Rosa company. But when it came to "Dove sono," the conductor was really great: he squeezed every drop of nectar it contains out for us to the very last drop, and never relaxed his care, not even for the tiniest fraction of a bar. I will not blame the singer for putting in a little *liaison* of her own at the reprise, though I hope she will creep up to it diatonically instead of chromatically in future; for the chromatic progression is a mannerism of Meyerbeer's; and a patch of Meyerbeer on Mozart does not match nicely. All the rest was like that. The sentimental parts were nursed with the tenderest care; but the dramatic and rhetorical parts were treated as so much purely decorative music, kept going very tightly and strictly and rapidly, and played with perfect precision and prettiness: that is to say, for Mozart's purpose, not played at all. The singers, in these rhetorical and dramatic passages, could do nothing but hold on hard lest they should find themselves in the last bar but one. Mr. Newman's complaint that he could find none of the bitterness Beaumarchais gave to Figaro in the air "Aprite un po gli occhi" was therefore not Mozart's fault. It is true that Mozart made no attempt to write political music in the sense of expressing not only wounded human feeling but the specific rancor of the class-conscious proletarian; but the wounded feeling is provided for very plentifully if only the conductor will allow the singer to put it in instead of treating him as if he were one of the second violins. That unlucky power of juggling with music which enabled Mozart to force dramatic expression upon purely decorative musical forms makes it possible for a conductor to treat any of his numbers as merely a sonata or rondo or what not; and this is very much what Sir Thomas Beecham does except when he comes to the beauty bits which appeal to him by their feminine sweetness. In conducting Wagner or Strauss he could not do so, because if he ignored the dramatic element there would be nothing left but senseless sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. In Mozart's case what is left is a very elegant and pretty sonata movement; and with this Sir Thomas is quite satisfied. But even whilst securing a spirited and polished execution of the music on this plane, he shews a curious want of appreciation of Mozart's personal quality, especially his severe taste. After strangling his singers dramatically, he allows them to debase the music by substituting for what Mozart wrote what he no doubt might have written if he had been, not a great composer, but a conceited singer. Sir Thomas thinks that his singers are better composers than Mozart: he allows Susanna not only to transpose passages an octave up, as if he could not stand her quite adequate low notes, but to alter wantonly the end of "Deh vieni non tardar," a miracle of perfect simplicity in beauty, into what seems by contrast a miracle of artificial commonplace, not to say vulgarity. After conducting Basilio's aria—that quaint paean of meanness which only a great actor could make intelligible—so completely in the spirit of abstract music that not even the roar of the tempest or the growl

of the lion is suggested by the orchestra, he allows him to perpetrate the most third-class of all operatic tricks, the bawling of the last note an octave up in order to beg a foolish encore by a high B flat. As this is not weakness on Sir Thomas Beecham's part; for he is strict to tyranny in getting what his artistic conscience demands, he must really consider that his singers are improving Mozart. He actually lays himself open to the suspicion of having suggested the improvements. In that case there is nothing more to be said. What is clear so far is that he likes XVIII. century music in its XVIII. century form; and that this taste of his, highly creditable so far as it goes, has brought him accidentally into contact with Mozart; but of and for the specific Mozart who was not for the XVIII. century but for all time he knows and cares nothing.

Now this opinion of mine is only an opinion unless it can be brought to the test of experiment. Who am I that I should criticize a conductor of Sir Thomas Beecham's experience, and an artistic director of his proved enterprise and popularity? Simply nobody but a man of letters of no musical authority at all. Well, I propose an experiment, and a very interesting one. Let Sir Thomas Beecham induce Sir Edward Elgar to take over Figaro for just one night. Elgar has not only the technical tradition (which is being so rapidly lost that I wish the Government would at once commission him to edit all Mozart's operas for State publication) but he understands the heroic side of Mozart, which includes the dramatic side. It is sometimes rather a rough side; but Elgar would not be afraid of that. If Sir Thomas does not after one hearing blush to the roots of his hair and exclaim "Great Heavens! And I took this great composer for a mere confectioner!" I will pay a penny to any war charity he likes to name.

Mozart's opera scoring does in truth need some editing; for our conductors are spoiled by the copious and minute instructions which have been provided for them ever since they ceased to be a socially humble, professional caste fortified with an elaborate technical tradition instead of coming in from the general body of cultivated gentleman amateurs. Mozart jotted down *f* or *sf* in his score where Meyerbeer would have written *con explosione*. He wrote *p* where Verdi would have written *ppppp!* He did not resort to abbreviations to anything like the extent that the XVII. century and earlier composers did; but compared to XIX. century composers, who wrote down every note they meant to be sung, he used conventional musical shorthand to a considerable extent; and we want someone to fill in his scores as Arnold Dolmetsch has filled in the scores of Mozart's predecessors. Sir Thomas Beecham, relying on the existing scores, seems to have no conception of the dynamic range of Mozart's effects, of the fierceness of his *fortepianos*, the *élan* of his whipping-up triplets, the volume of his *fortes*. Even when Mozart writes *pp*, by which he means silence made barely audible (as in the first section of the Wedding March, for instance) we get at Drury Lane the same *mezzo forte* that prevails, except at a few blessed moments, during the whole performance. When the audience should be holding its breath to listen, or reeling from the thunder of the whole band and all the singers at their amplest, it still gets the same monotonous pretty fiddling that is neither high nor low, loud nor soft.

Yet on Thursday night, when I returned to hear the first two acts, I was carried away by the superb virtuosity of the orchestral execution, and the irresistible vigor and brilliancy of the great finale to the first act. Everything except this finale was far too fast even for all the instrumental effects, not to mention the dramatic ones; but I could not grudge the conductor his musical triumph; and I was positively grateful to him for audaciously forcing on us between the acts a slow movement for strings that had nothing to do with the opera, so finely was it played. It was pathetic and delightful to see the extraordinary pleasure of the audience, many of whom seemed to be discovering Mozart and going almost silly with the enchantment of it.

I repeat, the Drury Lane performance is charming; and very little additional care and understanding would make it great. It is, by the way, partly

a performance of Beaumarchais' *Mariage de Figaro*; and I think it probable that if Mozart could be consulted as to the propriety of this attempt to make the best of both theatrical worlds, he would say that what he had taken from Beaumarchais he had taken and ennobled, and what he had left he had left for good reasons. To drag the Countess of "Porgi amor" and "Dove sono," and the Cherubino of "Non so piu" and "Voi che sapete" back into an atmosphere of scandalous intrigue was dangerous; but it is not unsuccessful: Mozart carries everything before him. The scenery and costumes are rich and amusing. The idea seems to have been to do something in the style of Mr. Charles Ricketts; and the rose pink crinoline petticoats are certainly as much in the style of Mr. Ricketts as the sestet was in the style of Mozart: that is, Ricketts with Ricketts left out. Mr. Nigel Playfair did what a man could in looking after Beaumarchais; but it was Mozart that needed looking after, and Mr. Playfair could not supersede the conductor. However, I cannot bear to grumble; only I wish a little more thought had been added to all the money and time and trouble lavished. That last scene for instance, which should be so cunningly fitted to the music, and is not fitted to anything at all but a vague idea that it would make a pretty picture cover for a summer number of something. When I think of—but there! I think too much to be a reasonable critic.

G. B. S.

## Letters to the Editor.

### THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE MINIMUM WAGE.

Sir.—The proceedings on Monday, on the Corn Production Bill, revealed an extraordinary situation. Although the 25s. minimum wage, which has been fixed for the agricultural laborer, may at first sight seem a generous concession and an important step towards the regeneration of rural life, when it is examined it is seen to be no advance whatever on pre-war conditions, and even in some cases a retrogression. Twenty-five shillings to-day is equal to 14s. 6d. before the war, when the average wage was 17s. 6d., and only in one county was the average under 15s. In the worst-paid county the wage was not so low as 14s. 6d.

In 1913, when some of us proposed a minimum wage system, the present Prime Minister was one of the most ardent champions of a reform in agricultural wages. I cannot do better than recall his words at that time:—"There is no important industry in which those who are engaged in it are so miserably paid as that of the agricultural laborer. I think their wages and their housing conditions are a perfect scandal to this great country." It is difficult to reconcile this attitude with the action of the Government to-day. The Bill is now open to the grave charge of being a piece of class legislation. It represents a compromise between three parties—the public, the farmer, and the laborer. The interests of the two former have been generously furthered; but the cause of the laborer has been met in a very different spirit.

The President of the Board of Agriculture referred grandiloquently last week to the standard of life which he aimed at establishing, as one which would provide not only for the physical efficiency of the laborer, but also for the decencies and luxuries of life. Judged by this standard, the Bill is self-condemned. According to the present scale of prices, the agricultural laborer of this country will not be receiving a "living" wage.

To take the case of a man with a family of five children, it is obviously impossible for him to support them adequately on 25s. per week. I gave figures in the debate which have not been disputed, which have been very carefully drawn up, and are the actual weekly expenses of a household of seven people:—

	s. d.
Groceries	6 9
Meat	5 3
Bread and flour	7 0
Milk	1 9
Vegetables	0 6
Insurance and club	0 9
Coal	2 0
Boots and clothing	2 6
Rent	2 6
Total	<hr/> 29 0

The refusal of the Government to raise the minimum to 30s. is a grave mistake from the point of view of one of the main objects of the Bill—the need to attract labor to the land after the war. Could anything be more absurd than to claim

that the Bill will bring adequate labor for a great increase of arable cultivation, when the soldier, whose wife has received 28s. 6d. for keeping the family without spending a penny on the expenses of the father, is asked to work on the land for 25s. ? Twenty-five shillings is to provide for those who have hitherto cost 28s. 6d., with the addition of the most expensive member of the family.

The interests of the public demand emergency legislation, but it need not be accompanied by injustice.—Yours, &c.,

NOEL BUXTON.

July 25th, 1917.

#### SIR WILLIAM BARRETT AND THE REV. STANTON MOSES.

SIR.—In his recently-published work, "The Threshold of the Unseen," Sir William Barrett takes strong exception to the statement made by a reviewer of Sir Oliver Lodge's book "Raymond," to the effect that Mr. Podmore has suggested that the well-known medium, the late Rev. Stanton Moses, was guilty of *mala fides*. "Those who, like myself," writes Sir William, "knew both the Rev. S. Moses and Mr. Podmore, would be indignant if the latter attributed wilful deception to the former, but the writer (*i.e.*, the reviewer in question) is mistaken, and has no adequate grounds for thinking this was the case. It was necessary to refer to this matter, as the evidence of phenomena associated with Mr. Stanton Moses, which I have quoted in Part 2, might otherwise be regarded with suspicion by those who do not know the facts."

I have been greatly puzzled by this passage, for I find that Mr. Podmore writes with reference to the Rev. Stanton Moses: "It remains to construct, if we can, an intelligible conception of the man. . . . In default of any deficient evidence from other sources that physical manifestations of this kind are ever due to such hypothetical agencies, it seems reasonable to conclude that all the marvels reported at the séances were, in fact, produced by the medium's own hands: that it was he who tilted the table and produced the raps, that the scents, the seed pearls, and the Parian statuettes were brought into the room in his pockets; and that the spirit lights were, in fact, nothing more than bottles of phosphorized oil. Nor would the feats described have required any special skill on the medium's part. With the exception of the spirit lights—the preparation of which in the circle as constituted probably involved little risk—the things done are all such as tricky children and novices generally have practised for generations past on their credulous friends. I doubt if this Moses could have competed with Jannes and Jambres."

These words from Podmore's "Modern Spiritualism" (Vol. II., p. 286), are quoted by Dr. Ivor Tuckett in his "Evidence for the Supernatural," at p. 56, and in Appendix C, at p. 275, we find a further long quotation from the same work, wherein Mr. Podmore sets before his readers certain concrete examples of the ingenious devices employed by the Rev. Stanton Moses, whom he assumes to be an arrant "trickster." How, in the face of all this, it can be said that Mr. Podmore did not attribute "wilful deception" to the Rev. S. Moses I am at a loss to conceive.—Yours, &c.,

GEORGE GREENWOOD.

July 25th, 1917.

#### THE WAR AND POPULATION.

SIR.—In a foot-note to the article on "The Government and the War" in this week's issue of THE NATION, it is stated that "after three years of war it will only be possible for every sixth Frenchwoman to get married." This statement is contained in a quotation from the Danish Society for the Study of the Social Consequences of the War in France and Germany. Surely this must be a mistake, and, terrible as are the consequences of the war in France, they are not so terrible as that *five men out of every six of military age have been killed*, as this statement would imply.

I think that probably there has been a mistranslation, and that what is really meant is that *one Frenchwoman in every six will be unable to marry*—quite serious enough in all conscience!

The population of France, according to Whitaker's Almanack of 1916, at the last census was about 40,000,000 people, or 20,000,000 of each sex (France has not, like ourselves, an enormous surplus female population—probably because the men do not emigrate as ours do).

Thus the loss of 2,250,000 (as given by the Danish Society) would, roughly speaking, reduce the male population in proportion to the female to 18,000,000 men and 20,000,000 women, or nine women to ten men. But it has to be considered that—

(1) The men lost were in the prime of life, and the most likely to marry, and that their loss affects the women of the same generation, not the children or the old.

(2) That many (probably more than half) of the 2,000,000 men were already married, and left widows.

(3) That the Colonial troops, representing a population of

54,000,000, must be taken into account, as represented, although doubtless not proportionately, among the killed.

It is well that this horribly tragic side of war should be brought before the notice of those who do not realize the frightful blow to women dealt by the killing of every single man. On the other hand, it is not well to sap the energies of those who are working for a happier world, by making things appear even worse than they really are. THE NATION stands for a rational acceptance of the truth, and, at the same time, a cheerful attempt to alleviate the sufferings of this blood-stained time, and all its readers must feel a deep sense of gratitude to those responsible for its issue. THE NATION never makes out that things are worse than they really are; but in this case it is to be hoped that it has been misled by an error in translation.—Yours, &c.,

MARGARET BRADISH.

July 22nd, 1917.

[We find, upon again consulting the document from which we quoted, that Miss Bradish is correct in suspecting a mis-translation. The English version of the Danish pamphlet states that "it will only be possible for every sixth woman to be married," whereas the statement, as shown by figures quoted in our article this week, should be "it will be necessary for at least every sixth woman to remain unmarried."—ED., THE NATION.]

#### THE REFORM BILL—THE VOTE.

SIR.—The position is not quite clear, but apparently the House of Commons has accepted the principle of one man one vote. For a man to vote for three candidates at one election because he happens to reside in a three-member constituency, is obviously unfair. Hence the almost complete adoption of one-member constituencies. But a careful study of the last elections shows also great inaccuracy. Take the town of Leeds by way of specimen. It is a large town returning five members. The numbers voting at the last election were:—Liberal, 27,622, with four members; Labor, 6,734, with one member; Unionist, 22,366, with none. Supposing proportional representation had been in force, the number of votes required to win a seat is more than 9,000. The true representation of Leeds is thus three Liberals and two Conservatives. The Party system would have a very definite influence, but personal appreciation would be noticeable in determining individual votes.

Another instance of inaccuracy is this: Look at the County of London north of the river and west of Park Lane. There are five boroughs returning seven members in single-member constituencies. The numbers voting were: 36,000 Conservatives with seven members, and 24,000 Liberals with none. In Derby, with two members, one man one vote would probably have got in the Unionist. In like manner Devonport would have returned a Liberal, instead of two Conservatives. It is not a satisfactory answer to assert that the one misdeed balanced the other. Send the other Liberal to the constituency that wants him, and likewise the other Conservative.

Perhaps the majority of constituencies are one-member areas. There are many boroughs or country districts which are in every way united, although in public politics individual opinions may vary. Every effort should be made to keep up their common interest. The constituency, according to population, might be entitled to two or to three members. The one man one vote is perfectly simple, and, in its application to a moderate-sized electorate, is without difficulty in working.—Yours, &c.,

G. C. CRICHTON.

5, Longridge Road, Earl's Court, S.W.

#### THE CHURCH AND ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN.

SIR.—Mr. H. G. Wells, in "God, the Invisible King," makes the following statement:—"Nearly every Christian Church," he says, "inflicts as much discredit and injustice as it can contrive upon the illegitimate child. They do not treat illegitimate children as unfortunate children, but as children with a mystical and incurable taint of sin. Kindly, easy-going Christians may resent this statement because it does not tally with their own attitudes, but let them consult their orthodox authorities."

No one will suspect Mr. Wells of intentional misrepresentation. But surely there is some mistake. He implies that the Churches regard the illegitimate child as born in sin in a special sense—distinct from the sense in which we are *all* born in sin. What Church, then, teaches that the illegitimate, as such, have a "double dose" of original sin, or a "larger dose" than other people? Let us consult the orthodox authorities, as Mr. Wells advises. St. Thomas Aquinas holds that all descendants of Adam, with one exception, contract from Adam original sin. (*Summa Theol. Prima secunda 83, 3.*) This sin does not admit of degrees, but is equally in all men. (82, 4.) This doctrine may or may not be satisfactory; but it clearly disagrees with the second sentence in Mr. Wells's statement.

Though neither the Anglican Church nor the Free Churches possess any book which is for them quite what the *Summa Theologica* is for the Church of Rome, the position of

the Anglican Church, at least, seems clear enough. The same office, the same language about original sin, is used at the baptism of the legitimate and the illegitimate child. (Compare Art. IX.) Again, the theology of the Free Churches, where it is not distinctively Liberal, tends mostly towards Evangelicalism of a type singularly unlikely to fall into the error which Mr. Wells condemns.

But is the first sentence in Mr. Wells's statement any truer than the second? Very severe regulations have from time to time been made in regard to the illegitimate children of people in Holy Orders. (See e.g. the *Decretum* of Gratian, 2nd part, XV., 8.) But it seems clear that the motive here was not persecution of the illegitimate, but the repression of scandals due to clerical immorality. If the policy of the Church had been simply to make things unpleasant for illegitimate persons, the Church might have acted on the maxim, "Once illegitimate, always illegitimate"; or, again, it might totally have excluded all illegitimate persons from the priesthood. But, in truth, the theologians quite saw the force of the well-known text in Ezekiel XVIII. A striking passage in the *Decretum* (first part, Dist. LVI.) shows how very reluctant the Church was to punish (or even to appear to punish)—see *Summa Theol. Suppl. XLVIII.*, 2) the children for the sins of their parents. Again, if Mr. Wells will consult Tanqueray's *Synopsis Theologiae Moralis*, Vol. I., p. 756, he may think Tanqueray severe; but the passage will not bear out Mr. Wells's accusation. I do not know any reason why Mr. Wells should suppose that the official policy of the Church of England, or of any of the English Free Churches, has been more severe in this matter than that of Rome. Who, then, are the orthodox authorities whom Mr. Wells wishes us to consult?—Yours, &c.,

CHARLES J. SHEBBEARE.

Swerford Rectory, Enstone.

#### A PERTINENT SUGGESTION.

SIR,—Your contributor in "The Economic Basis of Peace" suggests that perhaps the Paris resolutions have been allowed to lapse, and that there never was any serious intention of building upon them. How can this be reconciled with Mr. Bonar Law's reply to the recent Unionist deputation protesting against the new ministerial appointments (reported in the "Daily News"), in which he said that the Paris resolutions still hold good? Is this "decent burial"?

The Government seems to lack any broad economic policy, and it is difficult to see, at present, how Great Britain can propose "first to the Council of the Allies, then to the world," the economic foundation for a League of Nations, so admirably outlined in the article quoted. Since Russia and America have "committed themselves to this liberal conception of the economic future," would not the suggestion come best from them in the form of a direct appeal to Great Britain and France as to whether they do, or do not, commit themselves to it also? If they do, they repudiate once and for all the Paris resolutions; if they do not, our position is at least clear. Mr. Lloyd George draws attention to the vagueness of the German Chancellor's speech; but is he very much more open himself? The Central Powers are still at liberty to believe in our war after the war policy. He intimates that the next step towards peace lies with the Germans in some definite pronouncement as to Belgium. Does not another necessary step lie with our Government in a clear definition of economic policy, which should give to the democracy here, and to the Central Powers, an outline for the future different from Mr. Bonar Law's picture of the Paris resolutions flourishing? Such statements from Germany and ourselves would be real steps towards peace, and we should know finally whether Mr. Bonar Law speaks for himself alone or for the Government. What we want to know is: Does our Government as a whole agree, or does it not, to a League of Nations on a sound, economic foundation? It is useless for us to hail a League of Nations if we repudiate the Liberal economic foundation with which the Paris resolutions are incompatible. Have we not a right to know where we stand?—Yours, &c.,

SYLVIA MILLS WHITHAM.

7L, Hyde Park Mansions, N.W. 1.

#### THE RELIGION OF THE TRENCHES.

SIR,—The letter of Mr. Moore in your current issue strikes a note of the deepest importance. Our brave fellows in the trenches are teaching us other lessons besides heroism and self-sacrifice. A few days since, at the Wesleyan Conference, Mr. Watkins, an Assistant Principal Chaplain, who has been at the front since the beginning of the war, said, "I say in the name of the boys overseas, 'All is not right with the Church.' Those men thought that the Church had failed, and should be cast on the scrap-heap, but they were always ready to hear of Jesus Christ. What sort of a Church," he asked, "were those men coming back to? They were not concerned with what a man believed, but what he was," &c.

The atmosphere is full of schemes of "Reconstruction."

In no department is a change more needed than in that of religion, or, rather, in the forms of religion. As Mr. Moore says, "Our formulas belong to an age that is past. . . . The final test will be neither the letter of Scripture, nor ecclesiastical tradition, but the experience of common life. . . . The real interests of the Church will not be served by expressing truth in forms which are untrue to the present, out of reverence for the past. And yet, so blind are the leaders of religion to-day as to the real state of things, that in a solemn document called a "Declaratory Statement of Common Faith and Practice," lately issued by the leaders of Nonconformity, the old beliefs are re-stated in almost entirely the old forms. And the Anglican bishops will not stir a step. All this explains the plain man's attitude towards the Churches of to-day. He is and will remain outside the Churches unless some drastic reconstruction takes place.—Yours, &c.,

P. E. VIZARD.

Hampstead.

SIR,—Is Mr. Moore quite right in saying that the Church insists on belief as "the primary requisite to membership in the Body of Christ"? Surely, according to the Catechism and the Baptismal service, the primary requisite is that of renouncing "the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh." That of believing all the articles of the Christian Faith comes second, and even that is followed by the obligation of keeping God's holy will and commandments and of walking in the same all the days of the catechumen's life.

I have a fairly wide acquaintance with Church life, and I do not think I am wrong in saying that as a matter of fact it is the first and third conditions that are most insisted upon, though, naturally, the Church does not want to banish the intellect entirely from its place in religion by ignoring the question of belief.—Yours, &c.,

CLEMENT F. ROGERS.

1, Vernon Chambers, Southampton Row, W.C.

July 22nd, 1917.

#### MRS. BESANT AND THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

SIR,—In your issue of July 21st appears a letter from Mr. Baillie Weaver as General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in England and Wales, protesting against the recent orders of the Governor of Madras with regard to Mrs. Besant and others on the ground, *inter alia*, that these orders are an infringement of religious liberty.

But how is it that Mr. Baillie Weaver is not aware of Mr. Chamberlain's statement in the House of Commons, on the 10th inst., that "the Madras Government offered to relax their orders so far as purely religious or theosophical writings or teachings were concerned. He understood that this concession had been refused by the parties to whom it was offered on the ground, *inter alia*, that it was impossible to distinguish between theosophical and religious writings on the one hand and their political agitation on the other. Mrs. Besant's communication was, he was informed, violently worded, and emphasized the unity of the Theosophical Society with the political aims of their organization."—Yours, &c.,

J.

July 23rd, 1917.

#### Poetry.

##### WHEN YON FULL MOON.

WHEN yon full moon's with her white fleet of stars,  
And but one bird makes music in the grove;  
When you and I are breathing side by side,  
Where our two bodies make one shadow, love;

Not for her beauty will I praise the moon,  
But that she lights thy purer face and throat;  
The only praise I'll give the nightingale,  
Is that she draws from thee a richer note.

For, blinded with thy beauty, I am filled,  
Like Saul of Tarsus, with a greater light;  
When he had heard that warning voice in Heaven,  
And lost his eyes to find a deeper sight.

Come, let us sit in that deep silence then,  
Launched on Love's rapids, with our passions proud,  
That makes all music hollow—though the lark  
Raves in his windy heights above a cloud.

W. H. DAVIES

## The World of Books.

THE "NATION" OFFICE, THURSDAY NIGHT.

- THE following is our weekly selection of books which we commend to the notice of our readers:—
- "A Counsel of European Nations." By R. C. (Elliot Stock. 1s. net.)
  - "Pope Benedict XV. and the War." By Anthony Brennan. (P. S. King. 1s. net.)
  - "Outlines of Political Economy." By S. J. Chapman. (Longmans. 6s. net.)
  - "The Fight for Democracy." By J. A. Hobson. (National Labor Press. 1s.)
  - "Liberalism for Short." By George Radford. (Constable. 1s. 6d. net.)
  - "Dion's Roman History." Tr. by Ernest Cary. (Heinemann. 5s. net.)
  - "Seneca ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales." Tr. by Richard M. Gunmire. (Heinemann. 5s. net.)
  - "Cæsar: The Gallic War." Tr. by H. J. Edwards. (Heinemann. 5s. net.)
  - "Trade Unionism on the Railways, its History and Problems." By G. D. H. Cole and R. Page Arnot. (Allen & Unwin. 2s. 6d.)
  - "The World of States." By C. Delisle Burns. (Headley. 2s. net.)
  - "South Wind." By Norman Douglas. (Secker. 6s. net.)
  - "The Loom of Youth." By Alec Waugh. (Grant Richards. 5s. net.)

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WHEN there is danger of the world of books ceasing to revolve round the sun—the light of mind—its cosmopolitans very naturally feel the desire for a congress of discussion about it. Such a meeting being very properly democratic, and open to the expression of the least as the most influential opinion, let me rise from the body of the hall and address it. Now, is the reason why the quality of books during the war has been so starveling and insubstantial a natural or an artificial one? Should we be right in attributing something of this pauper condition to the part deliberate, part instinctive dislike of intelligence by the governing classes—to a conspiracy, semi-conscious and semi-unconscious, against the human mind? After all, the best answer is to take a bird's-eye view of the phenomena of events. Primarily and directly there is the tax on paper, at a time when purple and fine linen clamor for the *body* from the shop-windows of the West End, and the silks and velvets of Taprobane can hardly be said to be languishing under the iron heel of sumptuary laws. The effect of this, of course, is to force publishers to issue only those books which will command an instant circulation—ephemeral ones, in fact. But this sinister desire that people should be ignorant, in order that they should be docile, operates in all the intellectual provinces. I will touch only on those contiguous to the dear motherland of good books. There is the readiness, rather eagerness, of the authorities to daff aside the educational regulations and to employ children upon adult occupations. Teachers are not exempt from military service, and soldiers are planted in schools, to such an extent in some towns that education has to be carried on in double shifts. The closing of free libraries, in spite of the fact that their staffs are minute and it would have been the easiest thing in the world to organize voluntary labor. The museums, again—particularly those whose exhibits are artistic. By an agreeable shaft of irony, indeed, our rulers recognize that there is no room for education in Whitehall, and banish the Education Department to the South Kensington Museum. Literature itself, partly by indirect compulsion, partly by the cruel pressure of circumstances, partly by its own idolatries, is tied to the wheel of the present.

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THE stifling of free discussion and of ready intercommunication is a way that they have in wars. But it is part of the same movement. The increase in tram, omnibus, and railway fares, the raising of postal rates, the attempt to abolish postcards, are so many shifts to check human intercourse, that impact of mind upon mind which generates the force and mobility of intelligence. I am merely drifting haphazard among these icebergs of example, and it would take up the space of the rest of this week's NATION to enumerate all of them that

have come looming down upon us from the polar regions of official desolation. Our governors, in a word, require us to live by the standards of the Man-in-the-Street, and want our head to live from hand to mouth.

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I WOULD hardly suggest that all this decomposition of national intelligence is the result of a Guy Fawkes plot hatched out of the cockatrice of war. To my mind, the Scarlet Press laid the fuse in the years before the war. By sapping the power of the mind's resistance, it did not actually suppress it, but it left uncommonly little to be suppressed. It did not apply coercion, but it ate like a microbe into the healthy tissues of the public brain—by steadily presenting it with everything but intelligence. Its purpose, whether elaborated or not, was (and, of course, is) to prevent people from thinking—by providing them, day in and day out, with the peppered pap of exclamation, invective, sensation, rhetorical appeal, and the like—rather than with the hard, honest biscuit of thought. Intelligence stood up to its foe with a blunted sword, and it needed no expert to smite it into the dust.

\* \* \*

IT would be a profitable matter to look up the records of history upon the persecution of the mind—to the conditions which drew forth Milton's "Areopagitica," the censorship of the Spanish Inquisition, the book-slaughtering "Avec privilège du roi" of Louis XIV., and others. But one as good as any other are the Tudor and Elizabethan injunctions, proclamations, and decrees for the suppression of treasonable or heretical literature. At a time when the Church was the cement of the State, their design was theologico-political. And the instrument, the machinery of the Elizabethan Executive, was the Stationers' Company, incorporated in 1557. The Company, to quote Mr. McKerrow, the best authority, had "supreme power over printing," "the right of search," and "control over all stationers, publishers, importers of books or bookbinders not belonging to the Company, as well as over its own members." What was its general effect upon Elizabethan literature? It did not, in the first place, prevent one single book of literary importance from reaching the public; and, in the second, it drove the Puritan agitation underground, to reappear with such devastating force upon the head of the Stuart monarchy.

\* \* \*

AND what effects can one postulate for the far more powerful and effective invasion of the intellect to-day? They will be and are, one imagines, threefold. In the first place, a violent reaction of the suppressed minority of intelligent people away from government and the general public, so far as its ideas are palatable to government. Secondly, the divorce of government and thought. Thirdly, the tendency of literature, art, and general intelligence, on account of their isolation, to become eccentric, faddy, provincial, impotent on the one hand and intensely *individual* on the other, and rarer. And individuality, living in the cellar, may very well lose its sight, but it may, too, here and there, become highly detached and critical. Elizabethan literature was saved from paralysis by the broad national current of alertness, curiosity, and freedom of mind. We moderns, alas! have little enough of them. Intelligence, nevertheless, has something else to fall back upon in its dug-out—good books, books that have already been published for several hundreds of years, from Caxton, the Mother Carey of our language, to the descending generations of his chicks, and books whose candle cannot be put out by the darkest, most expensive, and formidable of bureaucratic snuffers. I am aware that this may sound like a pleasant irrelevance, an amiable idiosyncrasy. It is nothing of the kind. Drive intelligence underground and you will soon be standing above subterranean fires within the area of eruption. The gifts of God are immortal gifts, and intelligence cannot be killed. But if it prepare and equip itself, if it ally itself with knowledge, then indeed it will emerge as a tremendous constructive force, capable of governing, not by external, but by inherent right. It will emerge, too, let us hope, as the utterance no longer of English, French, or German provincialism, but as the utterance of human life. So that there are ways of getting one's own back, after all!

## Reviews.

### LOISY'S "RELIGION."

"*La Religion.*" By ALFRED LOISY, Professeur au Collège du France. (Paris: E. Nourry. 3 fr. 50.)

TILL the disastrous pontificate of Pius X., Professor, then the Abbé, Loisy was the first of living Catholic scholars. To many of the readers of this, the most recent of the "petits livres rouges," it may seem that, had the Church been governed with wisdom, he might still be so; and that it is rather accent and emphasis than substance which divide "the little less" from "the little more." The "might have beens" of history are melancholy reading; for institutions, as for individuals, the day of visitation comes, passes, and does not return. Since the death of Leo XIII., the moral and intellectual decline of Catholicism has been rapid; and it may be doubted whether the rigidity of external discipline, which is the condition of its coherence, will emerge unbroken from the strain to which it has been subjected by the attitude of the Papacy during the war:—

*"Comme si une autorité qui se prétend religieuse et morale ne s'avouait pas morte en se faisant neutre devant une pareille crise du genre humain! Comme si le seul mot de neutralité, appliquée aux choses de l'ordre moral, ne signifiait pas une abdication de la moralité!"*

"*La Religion*" deals not with any particular form of religion, Christian or non-Christian, but with that which underlies and takes shape in the various religions—i.e., that upward-moving impulse which is a permanent factor in human nature, and which increases as the race advances, though its local and temporary presentations change. This increase takes place in the teeth of opposition; the moral life of man, as well as the material, is "a warfare upon the earth." And it is upon morality that the emphasis falls throughout:—

*"L'incredulité, comme telle, et par elle-même, n'est point un principe de la vie morale. C'est pourquoi la crise des croyances aurait été, plutôt à surveiller, à modérer, à diriger, qu'à précipiter et accélérer. La foi évolue avec l'humanité qui vit, et les croyances changent; mais une révolution inconsidérée des croyances peut mettre en péril et la foi morale et la vie morale d'un peuple."*

These are not the words of an iconoclast; they might have come from Newman or Burke.

The "notes" of the writer's mind are virility and detachment. Among Frenchmen both would be considered essential in a teacher who wished to be taken seriously; and would be taken for granted in a professor at the Collège de France. Either would handicap a candidate for a theological chair at an English university; English religion is expected to speak from a denominational standpoint, and in epicene tones. The result is that here sacred studies are confined to the clergy. In France they appeal to a larger public; and those who will be at the pains of reading "*La Religion*"—it is not very easy reading—will be at no loss to know why.

The thesis developed is an adaptation of the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel:—

*"Au commencement était le devoir,  
Et le devoir était dans l'humanité,  
Et le devoir était humanité."*

In other words, religion and morality—the two are kindred and correlative quantities—are as old as human nature, and are, in the last resort, one with it. They are not matter of speculation or abstract reasoning—an "independent" morality is as purely a figment as a "supernatural" religion: the psychological and historical argument has taken the place of the proofs from miracle and prophecy; "the gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." Religion, then, is not, like the impassive Divinity of the poet:

*"Semota ab nostris rebus sejunetaque longè."*

It is flung into the welter of life and history, to sink or swim, sharing the mixed fortunes of our race. It has known strange allies; fetishism in one age, magic in another, politics in a third—and to this day these have left their traces upon it: it is fanatical here, philosophical there; it is gross or refined, illiterate or learned, popular or governmental, according to its environment and the

cultural level of those among whom it is found. Does not this explain what is loosely spoken of as its "break-down" or "bankruptcy" in the stress and strain of the period in which we live? Such phrases betray the poverty and inaccuracy of thought of those who use them; these writers conceive religion as a Divine substance or emanation throned apart and in a super-human sphere. It is not so. It has "been made flesh, and dwells among us"; it shares our passions, our limitations, our imperfect knowledge, and our infirm will. Thus, in the case of the Germans,

*"Un vent de folie a tourné la tête d'un peuple fort, et il a cru qu'il était dieu . . . sans se douter, bien qu'il soit très savant, que cette infatuation de soi est précisément la marque d'une moralité inférieure, d'une mentalité de primitifs."*

The five chapters of the book discuss respectively: (1) How religion and morality came before us in history; does not duty, as a fact, present itself to men as a religious obligation? (2) The broad lines of the historical development of mankind, moral and religious—have not the two advanced *pari passu*? (3) The general character and the actual factors of this development—has it not consisted in an increasing tendency to accentuate the individual and the interior? (4) The manner in which it has been brought about—was it not by a discipline covering the life of the individual as a whole? and, as time goes on, does not such a discipline become more and more a condition of the future of civilization and of mankind? (5) How the faith on which the moral life rests finds expression—is it not in symbolic formulas and rites, which are at once links between men and men, and springs of religious emotion? And are not these symbols, which by a law of their being become outworn, capable of renewal, without this renewal meaning the loss of the faith by which the just live?

The form in which these questions are put suggests the answers; and these indicate a philosophy of history, based on history, the lines of which will be found in M. Loisy's exceptionally concrete and stimulating book. It is perhaps with regard to the last of the five that the greatest, or at least the most obvious, difficulty arises. For "we see not our tokens"; in all countries, and among all classes, religious observance is on the decline. Such movements as our own National Mission, and the much-advertised "renouveau religieux" in France—both were rather political than religious in character—were attempts to arrest its downfall. Neither was successful. For it is impossible for one age to retain the beliefs or to renew the experience of a preceding period; in a world in movement all things, even the gods, are in flux and flow. No one can withdraw himself from the stream; to say that either our beliefs or our experience are those of a past generation is to say that we have no real beliefs and no first-hand experience at all. This is why reactions are never genuine; their Achilles' heel is their element of make-belief, while the attempts at restatement and reconstruction which have been made seem to want actuality. Modernism could not have been suppressed, had it had any real hold on Catholicism; Liberal Protestantism, unanswerable as an argument, fails somehow as a belief, to attract or inspire. Nevertheless it is on these lines, we may believe, that religious advance will be made. The inspiration in which they are at present wanting will come, in all probability, from the social and economic developments which will follow the war; political opportunism, not to say Toryism, is the rock on which, in middle age, Broad Churchmen are apt to make shipwreck. It is the fact that the permanent element in Christianity is not unity of creed-content, but of origin and direction, which gives its traditional sanctities the elasticity distinguishing spirit from letter and dead matter from life. That they may be adapted to the growing needs of men is probable: "*la foi qui se fait trouvera les rites qu'il lui faut.*" But this does not mean either a breach with the past, or the permanent abolition of cultus. With regard to this first, "the old is better"; with regard to the second:—

*"Worship befits us mortals; to adore  
Is human."*

And what is human is ever with us.

*"Wherefore, thou,  
Worship the Power—in this all creeds agree—  
Which from Olympus speaks, or Sinai's brow;  
Or beams, diviner, from beloved eyes."*

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## THE DECLINE OF THE CRITIC.

"From Shakespeare to O. Henry: Studies in Literature." By S. P. MAIS. (Grant Richards. 5s. net.)

INTEREST in literature for its own sake has been so inevitably disrupted during these three terrible years, that a problem of the utmost importance to its prosperity has missed contemporary notice. That problem is the relation between the author and his critic, between the man who writes books and the man whose public duty it is, in the first place, to pronounce their value, and in the second, to expound and interpret it. This is not the place to enumerate the causes of the problem's imminence, but the most casual survey of modern letters, so multiform, so various in appeal, and so indiscriminate, must be cumulative evidence that it exists. And Mr. Mais's book is valuable for no other reason than that it points to the need of a reaffirmation and redefinition of the critic's service to a badly educated reading public. The reason why it is convenient to select Mr. Mais's book as material for this discussion is, unfortunately, nothing to do with his own virtue. It is because his essays having appeared in such serious and distinguished publications as the "Fortnightly Review," the "Nineteenth Century," and the "Journal of Education," must, if they are certainly not actual contributions to the proper study of books, be treated as to some extent representative, and because, overrunning as they do almost the entire area of modern literary production (including Butler and Mr. Hardy, not to mention Shakespeare and the eighteenth century), they do open up a line of least resistance towards a generalization. Mr. Mais's book, in fact, by illustrating the decline of criticism, by passing before our eyes the voluminous subject-matter with which criticism has to deal, and by dealing with it so erroneously, so nervously, and so entirely without good notions about it, does quite innocently put the case for the critic's rehabilitation.

Let us reluctantly cast away the pleasant excitements of these "studies"—such as the recommendations of Mrs. Aphra Ben and "The Case of Otranto," or the epigrams, "the object of a poet is to make the most of life," and "who is there who dare confess to his soul that he does not admire Mr. Selfridge, Mr. Bottomley, and Lord Northcliffe?" for its array of professional judgments—judgments which have appeared among the weightiest of our journals and been handed down in book-form (a book of literary criticism in war-time, remember!) to a receptive public. Take the eighteenth century. Among the usual clichés as to its "robust sanity" (Hogarth had something to say about that), we hear that "Gulliver's Travels" is "one of the most humorous books ever written." Mr. Mais must have a queer sense of humor, so queer that it would, we suppose, be of little avail to tell him that Swift never showed the faintest trace of humor. There are artists like Fielding and Rabelais, who interblend satire and humor, and Mr. Mais has perhaps concluded that the two are interchangeable terms. For the rest, we can assure Mr. Mais that Pope is not always insincere, shallow, and imitative; that the writers of the heroic couplet did not "knock a sense of rhythm into the English head"; on the contrary, for nearly a hundred years they knocked it out; that Walpole's romance is not a "prescription for those who would forget the woes of to-day"; that "Pamela" and "Moll Flanders" were not written "with the one idea of amusing their readers (the italics are not ours); that an interest "in all sorts of different things" is not a feature of the eighteenth century, and that Dr. Johnson is not an embodiment of John Bull. One of these misjudgments declares that Ossian "shows yet another cleavage from the school of Pope." It is worth while pausing upon this, because it is really a popular fallacy. The false, woolly, and tasteless romanticism of Ossian is indeed correlative to the sham reality behind the correct appearance of eighteenth century standards of taste. It may, perhaps, be an extremist point of view, but there is a good deal to be said all the same for an opinion which views the deficiencies of that taste from the same angle as those of "the man of the world."

The only poet among the moderns whom Mr. Mais does not greet with an halloo of appreciation is Mr. Davies, whom he thinks is "flimsy" and has "deteriorated." Messrs.

Egbert, T. Sandford, Theodore Maynard, Cecil Roberts ("the marvellous boy" and "our twentieth century Keats"), Miss Eva Gore-Booth, and others of whom, likewise, we have never heard—each in turn is clad in the white samite of Mr. Mais's enthusiasm. Rupert Brooke he hails in terms which Shelley, Blake, and Wordsworth might be proud of, and quotes his worst poem as voucher of a tone sufficiently dithyrambic. The Georgians then pass in procession through the cheering crowds of our author's praise, and were there any more doubts of the "renascence" of poetry in our times, we are called upon to witness the circulation of Mr. John Oxenham's verse. Being by this time acclimated to his method of worship, we are able to endure with hardly more than a lift of the eyebrows Mr. Mais's remarkable verdicts, (a) that this "is the supreme age of lyrical sweetness"; (b) that "never was an age so rich in poets in history as our own" (true—Mr. Mais should see the number of volumes of verse that pour into a newspaper office in a week!); and (c) "we live in a time of amazing literary geniuses of every sort." So with the novelists, so with the dramatists, until we are left, in this dazzling marriage of quality with quantity, with the impression that the war is the inevitable reaction from the excess of privilege granted to us by living in an era so fortunate.

Such is an example of the critical qualifications exacted for publicity from our periodicals and publishers. What conclusions emerge from it? In the first place that indiscriminate appreciation, lavishly applied without principles to the least as to the most deserving, is the vice of a modern criticism subject to the dangerous and interacting interests of advertisement. Secondly, the loss of the conception that the critic is a public servant, with public responsibilities, and not a mere author's trumpet. Thirdly, the failings of the impressionist method as contrasted with the selective. Fourthly, the necessity of status for the critic, so that it may be his accepted function not only to interpret the author to the public, not only to serve that public, but to educate it in taste. Mr. Mais is, of course, an extreme example of the other kind of thing. But can it be denied that he is characteristic of the average attitude of journalism to literature, or that this attitude forms a highly important section of the problem of education? A week or two ago the present writer was reading through some of the old "Cornhills," which occupied in those days something of the same position that the "Fortnightly Review" and the "Nineteenth Century" do now. The knowledge, justness, proportion, conviction, and open-mindedness of the criticisms in them were not only a delight to read, but an indication of how severe an ordeal an author had to pass through. In the fashions and welter of contemporary letters, a little of it durable, a great deal more perishable, is not a strong, stable dam of criticism necessary both to stem and direct the flood of authorship into the public stream below it?

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THE "Times Literary Supplement" had an article the other day, in which the writer claimed that the peculiar virtue of the novel being that it has no conventions imposed upon it, the only standard demanded of the novelist and the one duty obligatory upon him are "never for a moment to write about anything that does not interest himself." Construction is "the art of leaving out, without incoherence all that does not interest the writer and of putting in all that does." As for the characters, they, so far as their creator is interested in them, must elope with the plot—run away with it, *rentre à terre*, as Shakespeare in "Hamlet" and Dostoeffsky did. This is a Declaration of Independence, with a wannion, as the Elizabethans say. And it is certainly a knock-out blow to the average novelist, who, like a little local tradesman, draws his ready-made commodities of event and type from an orthodox central warehouse, and simply sticks them in the window for the customer. That is, indeed, what this point of view implies. It is a reaction against convention,

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and it leaves the novelist so entirely free to his own devices that if he be violently interested in philately, Greek particles, or the Divine Right of War Cabinets, he can spill them out upon us to his pen's content. Suppose, in short, the novelist happens to be interested in uninteresting things, it is surely rather optimistic to assume his absorption in them is a guarantee of ours and a complete vindication of his artistry. The theory of the writer, in fact, is not the truth, but a partial approximation to it. While it does not leave them out, it does incline to treat somewhat cavalierly two other aesthetic laws of prime importance—the art of presentment and the art of communication. And it gives far too dangerous a licence to the mere dogmatist.

At any rate, good and bad, Mr. Norman Douglas's "South Wind" is a part reflection of it. It does not possess the faintest shadow of plot, either as a foster-mother of personality or a makeshift expedient. Its characterization is built up in terms not of the individual, but of ideas. The characters, that is to say, are vehicles for the ideas that Mr. Douglas is interested in. It is nearly five hundred pages long, and it is practically nothing else but talk and commentary. That is by no means to condemn it, for Mr. Douglas is not only a very brilliant talker, but he equips the apparatus of conversation with such irony (he knows his Voltaire and his Rabelais), such literary ease, suavity, and grasp, such wit and epigrammatic force, that he proves an extremely tactful and persuasive host. Just as Boccaccio used his garden, so he the island of Nephente in the Mediterranean, with its suggestive landscape, its persistent south wind, and its peculiarity of remoteness and strangeness (Pater would have liked to sit upon one of its volcanic peaks and evolve phrases) for extricating the original, the perverse, the striking and eccentric in attitude or theory. But the significance of the book is not so much that Mr. Douglas is expressing his interest over a given intellectual area, as that those interests themselves are choice, mature, scholarly, and broad. And the author knows how to embrace divergent interests and to adjust them, to manoeuvre them in strategic relationship to one another with the least of friction and the most of point and contrast. He knows how to present them, in fact. We do indeed grow tired before the end, and feel the need of something rather more human and actual, and the freshness is apt to go out of so consistent an elegance. But it is an enjoyable book all the same, and very considerably superior to the average.

The whole point of Miss Mears's diverting novel—diverting with a solid background of seriousness behind—is the admirable co-ordination of all its parts. Those parts involve not only the mechanism of the story, but the quality of the author's mind, her choice of emotions to illustrate her theme, and of ideas to illustrate her purpose. Everything is dove-tailed with good and solid workmanship. And the reason for this success, we suspect, is not only that Miss Mears knows her tools and how to use them, but how to stand back and realize her perspective. Though she is grinding an axe—if the need for candor, honesty, and tolerance in sexual relations be called an axe to grind—she is aware, all the same, that without her characteristic attitude of humorous detachment, her point of view will not interest the best of readers. She consults, that is to say, something other than her own interest in life, in human nature, or in theories. "The Candid Courtship," indeed—without great qualities or pre-eminent virtues—strikes one as being exactly what a good, healthy, average novel ought to be in a time and condition of flourishing art.

Not so, we are afraid, Mr. Benson's novel. It begins quite well with the relations between a querulous, egoistic mother and her middle-aged son, who gives up his painting to attend upon her and her silly whims, and languors. But upon the mother's death, the book goes all to pieces. The son and the lady whom his mother had prevented him from marrying fifteen years before, devote themselves to a farcical, irritating effort to be young again—chiefly athletically young. If the hoary "badinage" of the two young people they try to live up to be a measure of youth, then to be ashamed of having outgrown it is so ludicrous that we lose all patience with the characters. Mr. Benson's novel, indeed, is old-fashioned, not so much because it represents the methods of an old school, but of a bad one.

## The Week in the City.

THE City has had a dismal week. The news from Russia is so disheartening that neither Russian roubles nor Russian bonds could be expected to maintain their values. Nor was it surprising, considering our enormous advances to Russia, that the depression should be communicated to the Consol Market and spread itself over the Stock Exchange. And on Wednesday, when the City Fathers read the speeches of Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. McKenna, they were again unpleasantly reminded of the enormous burdens and sacrifices which are being accumulated for incomes and estates in the future. Mr. McKenna is now a banker as well as an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, and his analysis of the position, as well as his plea for more financial control, is bound to make an impression. The end of three years reminds people of Lord Kitchener's prophecy of the duration of the war, and there are still optimists who think that autumn will put a period to the waste and carnage. These hopes undoubtedly help to prevent a collapse of values. The news that the United States is voting another thousand millions is also welcome. It is clear from Mr. Bonar Law's speech that more and more financial assistance from our prosperous transatlantic Allies is urgently required. The fact that practically all our American securities have been sold or mortgaged shows how pressing is the need for much greater financial aid than that which has so far been forthcoming from Washington.

### RAILWAY DIVIDENDS.

The first group of Home Railway dividends has now been declared. They are in accordance with the expectations of the market, which looked for little change. The following table shows these interim declarations, together with those of the same companies a year ago and just before the war.

	July, 1914. per cent.	July, 1916. per cent.	July, 1917. per cent.
Great Eastern	3	3	3
Midland Deferred	nil	3	3
City & South London	3	3	3
District 2nd Pref.	1	1	1
London Electric	3	3	3
Lancs. & Yorks.	3	3	3
Liverpool Overhead	2½	2½	2½
North Staffordshire	3½	3½	3½
Maryport & Carlisle	5	5	5
Taff Vale	4	3½	3½
London, Brighton	2½	2½	2½
London, Chatham Arb. Pref.	4	4	4
South Eastern	1	1	1

Another announcement is that of the directors of the Underground Electric Railways of London, that interest on the 6 per cent. first cumulative income debenture stock will be paid (less tax) at 3 per cent. on September 1st, and that coupon 19 of the 6 per cent. income bonds will, on the same date, be paid at 2 per cent. (free of tax). The market has recently seen some recovery in Home Railway ordinary stocks, but the rise has not been shared by prior-charge issues, which have not, in most cases, climbed very far above the lowest touched in the past year.

### BRAZILIAN TRACTION.

The Brazilian Traction, Light and Power Company, which is well known to British investors, is incorporated in Canada and operates in Brazil. Its receipts are in Brazilian currency, which has to be converted into Canadian currency. Thus the shareholders are very much at the mercy of the state of Brazil exchange. The low rate of the exchange for the milreis, states the report issued this week, meant a loss of \$3,000,000 in 1915 and \$3,300,000 in 1916, and has caused the directors to suspend for the time being the quarterly dividends. A total distribution of 4 per cent. was made in 1916 and 1915, against 6 per cent. in the two previous years. In 1916, revenue picked up from 77 million to 84 million milreis, or in Canadian currency from \$5,339,000 to \$5,764,000. The recovery, it is stated, was particularly marked in the latter half of the year. Now, with affairs improving in Brazil, and the value of the milreis greatly enhanced, the resumption of dividends equal to those of the past two years should not be a distant prospect. On the 4 per cent basis the ordinary shares at the present price yield exactly 8 per cent. They now stand in London at 50, were 66 before the war, and this year have been as low as 39½. In 1913 they touched 104.

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